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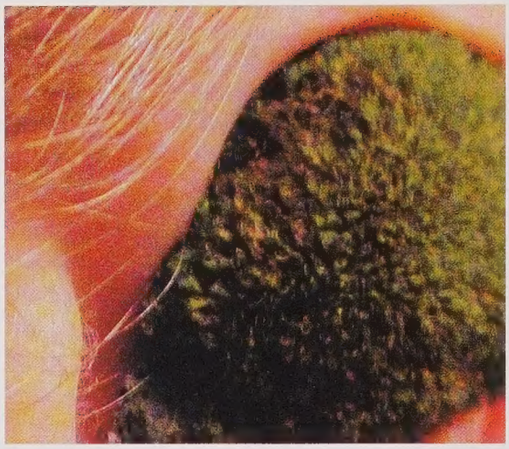

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FROM THE EDITOR

SUZANNE RAMLJAK

All art involves a process of transformation; the artist takes one substance or form and turns it into another. Such transfiguration is central to the practice of craft. Indeed, the Old English root of the word signifies "power," a meaning retained in witchcraft, where 'The Craft" refers to magical ability. An element of magic or alchemy pertains to finely executed objects, which have the power to spellbind viewers with their beauty and complexity.

Our cover artist Heather White van Stolk has "proven herself a master of transformation," according to authors Patricia Harris and David Lyon. White van Stolk affirms her love of altering materials: "I find complete bliss in the physical manipulation." Perhaps the most potent example of her alchemy is the series "Eight Marks of Beauty," moles and other skin irregularities that have been cast in 22k gold and now gleam like treasures when worn on the body.

Howard Risatti's Opinion piece on craft and design also underlines the magic inherent in creative acts. He writes, "In the past the ability to create an object was a kind of wondrous act because of the struggle of the hand to wrest a realm of culture from the material realm of nature." Contemporary craft—where Risatti locates the dialectical union of mind, body, and imagination—can still provide a source of such magical wonder.

A conceptual and formal sleight of hand is operative in Bettina Speckner's complex jewelry built around photographic images. As Kate Wagle describes it, "Speckner uses the powers of her medium to distract us," en route to her ultimate objective: "suspending the power of the object between formal structure and the content of image and materials."

As a Hopi spiritual leader and snake priest, Charles Loloma was well versed in the powers of religious magic. He kept his art and religion separate, however, and his dramatic jewelry relies solely on artistic skill and vision to leave us happily entranced....

SR

METALSMITH

a publication of SNAG, the organization for jewelers, designers and metalsmiths

***Metalsmith's* mission is to document, analyze, and promote excellence in jewelry and metalworking.**

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Covered casserole with handles, handwrought silver, ivory, c. 1950's

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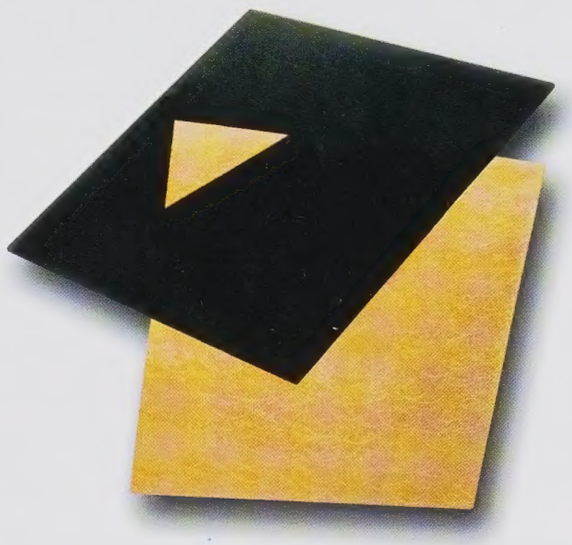

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Jessica Calderwood

SIGNS of LIFE Jessica Calderwood's work will appear in Signs of Life 2006 – a jewelry art show and companion publication that joins the work of nine artists and nine writers in a celebration of jewelry and literary art.

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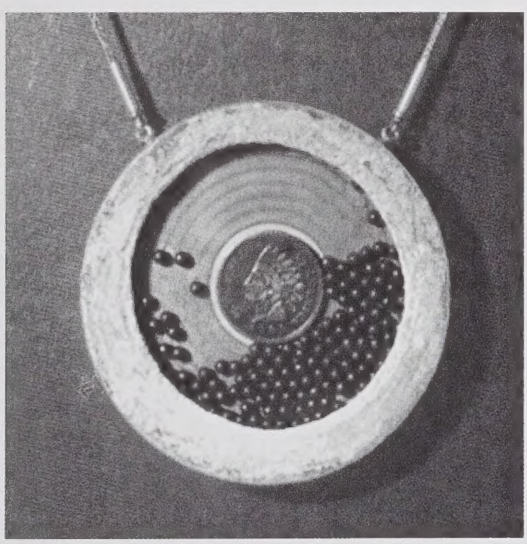

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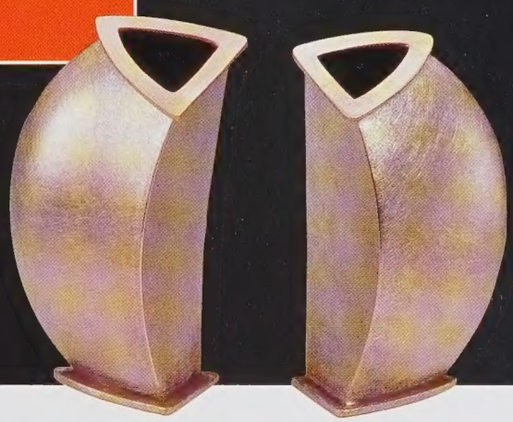

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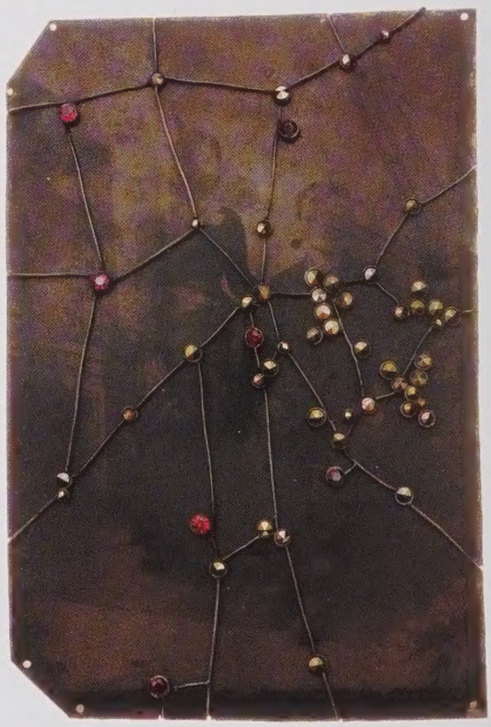

BETTINA SPECKNER *Brooch* 2005. ferrotype, silver, markasite, ruby

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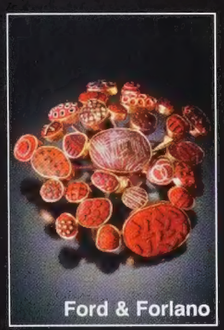

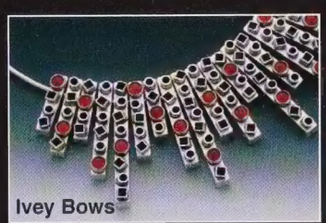

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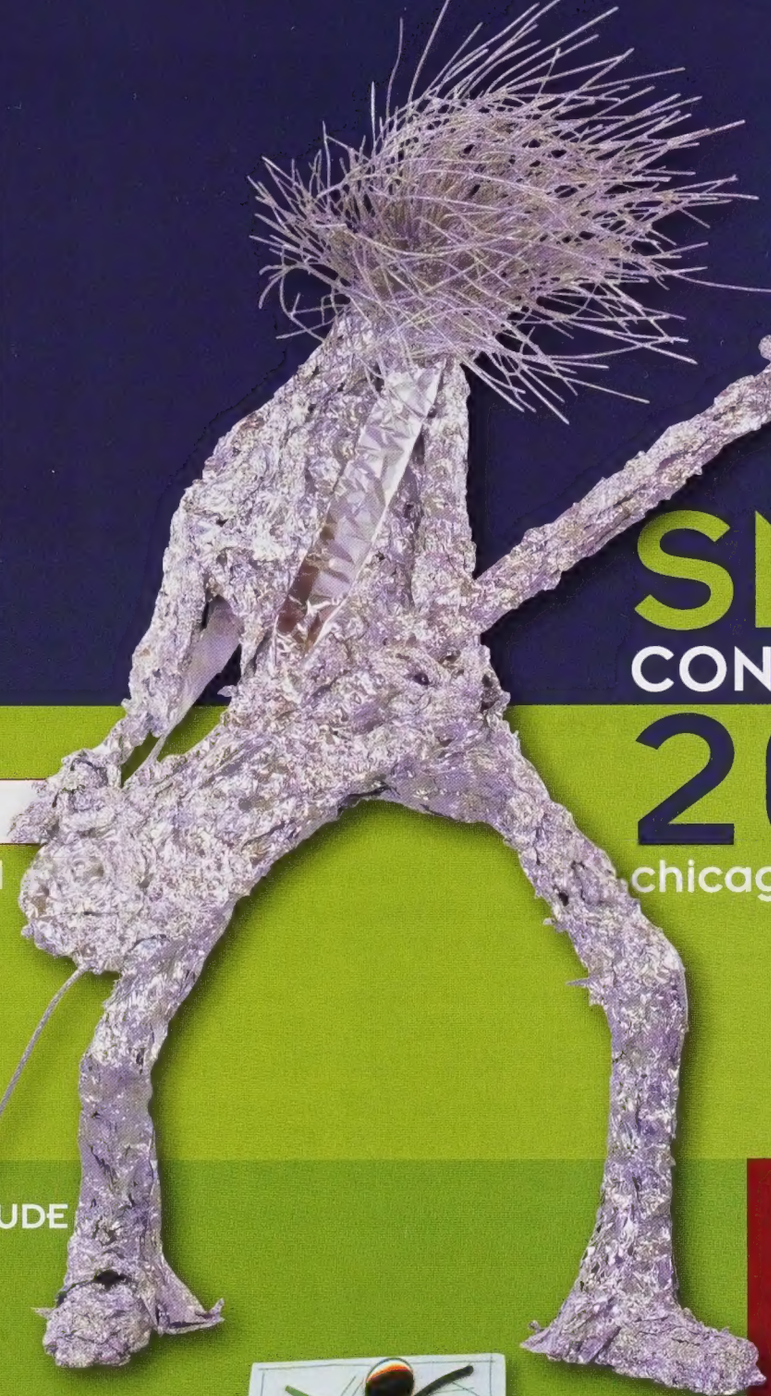

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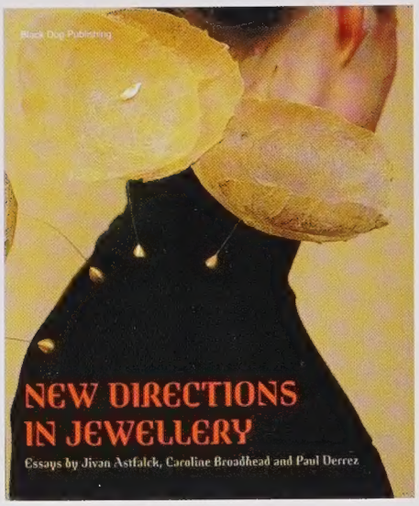
BOOKS

by Marjorie Simon



New Directions in Jewellery

Jivan Astfalck, Caroline Broadhead and Paul Derrez,
with introduction by Catherine Grant
Black Dog Publishing, London, 2005

Contemporary Jewellery: The Padua School

Graziella Folchini Grassetto
Arnoldsche, Padova, 2005

Two new European jewelry books crossed my desk this summer. One offered an uneven survey of jewelry concepts and the other strong work, beautiful production values, and thoughtful scholarship.

Claiming to be "a presentation of the numerous ways in which [jewelry] is developing," *New Directions in Jewellery* fails to deliver on its promise of "considerations of material [that] intersect with conceptual theses." Its strength, however, lies in the introductory essays by Paul Derrez, owner of Gallery Ra in Amsterdam, Jivan Astfalk, German-born goldsmith who teaches at the University of Central England in Birmingham, and Caroline Broadhead, groundbreaking British artist of the 1970s whose textile-based designs challenged existing notions of adornment and theater.

In a too brief statement, Derrez discusses new work from mostly Western European artists. He gives a concise history of the truly new, from the 1970s to the present, recalling the familiar—Gijs Bakker, Lam de Wolf—and introducing the unknown, a "German-based group *Chicks on Speed*...engaged in music and performance but also clothing and jewellery, using a punk, DIY aesthetic." He speculates about the reasons for the lack of strong production work in recent years, and on the influence of "street fashion."

Although jargon heavy, Jivan Astfalck's essay also positions jewelry in its numerous guises and offers examples of jewelry at the edges of concept and taste. Like body adornments such as piercing, or some of Norman Cherry's subcutaneous implants, Ted Noten's chewing gum brooches, cast from "life," exist at the edge of revulsion. Asserting the legitimacy of jewelry as a fine art form, Astfalck looks for "integrity of enquiry, knowledge of contemporary cultural issues, confidence in using artistic strategies." It is left for the reader to question whether the author's placement of precious, traditional earrings on stuffed animals really "reconfigures" the jewelry. Statements such as these point to a promise not kept in matching the level of work to the level of inquiry.

Astfalck's definitions and expectations for jewelry—a "shift in the referential status, which takes place in the transition of the image as replica to the image as fiction"—could apply to any number of media or modes of expression, and this is the good news. She treats the body as any other referent, and dares to create expectations for jewelry that are no different from any other art form, all the while cognizant of the specificity of the body.

Caroline Broadhead addresses the difficulty of nomenclature and explores the relationship between the object and the body—why body "adornment" isn't enough to describe what contemporary jewelry is or can be. She foregrounds the corporeal body, and raises the issues of physical and metaphysical boundaries vis-à-vis the ornament with some particularly provocative clothing from Adele Lutz and Suzanne Hammer. She uses the wonderful phrase "objects...active at the boundary of the body" and locates jewelry at the "junction of the personal, social, and cultural."

Broadhead's examples truly push the edge of the jewelry envelope in their use of bodily materials. Mona Hatoum's *Hair Necklace* takes the form of an outsized classic bead or pearl necklace, with graduated balls of the artist's own hair, displayed on a classic Cartier bust. Clearly referencing Victorian hair jewelry, they are creepy, but miles beyond Nanna Melland's necklace of a year's worth of nail pairings cast in gold. On the other hand, Millie Cullivan's ephemeral "lace collar," the pattern of white dust or talc blown through lace onto bare skin, achieves permanence through the photograph. There were some surprises and some real innovations too. I was glad to learn of Hilde De Decker's

experiments with vegetables and Kristina Apostolou's "textile-based necklaces and bracelets" that gave a nod to Broadhead's own work a generation or more ago. Some of the jewelry presented as new may be new only to the author(s). Laura Bates's dyed nylon origami offers a fresh look at an "alternative" material that nicely complements Svenja John and Helen Britton's use of plastic, although neither of these artists is included. Though I take issue with some of Broadhead's statements and examples, her overall essay is most welcome, and forms, with the other two essays, a penetrating inquiry into the meaning of "jewelry."

The book's flaw is that the work shown isn't up to the level of the text and the selection of artists is lopsided. Although the title doesn't specify this, more than three quarters of the artists live and work in the United Kingdom. About a dozen more were scattered around Western Europe, three were from the United States, and none were from further east than Germany. It feels as if three respected theoreticians were brought in to elevate a student project. The eight organizing categories are given catchy two-word titles, sound bites instead of information. Unfortunately, the selections in "Fashion Forward" are not the best examples of the iconoclastic young British presence in fashion, some of which was documented in 1997 in *Unclasped, A Survey of British Jewellery*, by the same publisher.

By contrast, everything that was missing from *New Directions* showed up in *Contemporary Jewellery: The Padua School*, by Graziella Folchini Grassetto. Writing in Italian with an excellent English translation by Gus Barker, the author explores traditional and innovative goldsmithing in Padua, from the sensuality of Mario Pinton, to the modernism and geometry of Francisco Pavan and Giampaolo Babetto, to the sublime Barbara Paganin.

Fritz Falk, former director of the Schmuckmuseum Pforzheim, opens his introduction by quoting Guido Gregoretti, who declared in 1983, "art jewellery ranks as a fine art....It is one form of visual art among several...." Falk defines "The Padua School" and emphasizes the significance of a school's founding teacher, naming among others Hermann Jünger at Munich Academy, and David Watkins and Michael Rowe at the Royal College of Art in London. In Padua, the great Mario Pinton began teaching at the Instituto "Pietro Selvatico" in 1944. But it wasn't until 1955, when he was joined by Francesco Pavan, that the "Padua School" really began to take shape, aided in 1969 by the addition of Giampaolo Babetto. Notably, all the goldsmiths at the school were born in or near Padua, so the name came to signify a sort of community, with roots deep in an Italian goldsmithing tradition dating to the ancient Etruscans.

Grassetto informs the reader that the Padua goldsmiths first gained recognition outside of Italy, becoming part of international design, and thus infusing new ideas from other venues. She identifies the elements of Pinton's aesthetic that were so influential, stemming from his exposure to design from Milan and Vienna.

The images illustrate principles and trends as well as examples of what can be accomplished when a strong design aesthetic is wedded to complete technical mastery. For example, the Instituto Pietro Selvatico was "intended to reaffirm the values of craftsmanship that had been undermined by the development of modern industry." Plane and solid geometry was part of the curriculum, with a far-reaching impact on design over decades. Experimentation involved geometry, space, and movement, not materials, although Pinton did re-introduce niello into the modern jewelry vocabulary.

The emphasis on geometry was picked up by Giampaolo Babetto, student and then teacher at the Pietro Selvatico, in fluid necklaces with interlocking repetitions also seen in contemporaneous silver from the Jensen atelier. Grassetto brings to light other artists less well known here, such as Paolo Maurizio, who created folded linked necklaces of colored titanium in a Pavan-esque style.

As each decade unfolds, design evolves, as Kineticism of the 1960s gives way to Minimalism in the 1970s and 1980s, perhaps best exemplified by Babetto's simple geometry. American sculptors such as Donald Judd and Sol LeWitt are invoked as reference points. The author sees Babetto as a bridge between the Italian tradition and developments in Munich, Pforzheim, and the Netherlands.

In the 1990s a very young Giovanni Corvaja paid homage to Italy's rich artistic history by his imaginative use of the ancient Etruscan art of granulation, once lost, then revived by the Castellani family in the nineteenth century. Of the same generation, Stefano Marchetti, like Pavan a decade before, "draws" with colored gold. Another new designer, Annamaria Zanella, adds a bold new stroke with pigments, enamel, and resins for color, in loosely rendered geometric forms.

Patiently, decade by decade, Grassetto unpacks the salient elements of the Padua School over 40 years—the fundamental place of geometry and inadvertently, its relation to the human body in terms of scale, the traditional use of gold and its "opposite," niello. She includes documentation of past exhibits and biographies of featured artists. Every aspect of this book is handled with authority, integrity, and intelligence—it provides a useful model of what scholarship about jewelry can be.

Marjorie Simon is a metalsmith and writer based in New Jersey.

OPINION

by Howard Risatti

Susie Ganch
Baby Cups, 2000
handmade of sterling, rubber, plastic
3 x 3 x 3 1/2"

Craft vs. Design/Recognition vs. Understanding

Although Design objects and Craft objects may look similar as functional objects, craftsmanship is more than simply an old-fashioned way of producing things we use. For me, the Craft process is fundamentally different from the Design process and in this difference lies its great value.

In true craftsmanship, conception and execution are integrated as physical properties of materials encounter conceptual form and conceptual form encounters physical material. In this encounter, thinking and making, visualizing and executing, go back and forth between material, hand, and mind. As ideas lead to the manipulation of materials and materials condition ideas, a truly dialectical and dialogical process occurs. It is this dialectical/dialogical process of mutual conditioning and modifying that is at the heart of craftsmanship.

There is no Cartesian dualism, no separation of mind and body, of conception and execution in true craftsmanship, because, as a dialectical and dialogical process, conceiving and executing, imagining and making, link together mind, body, and creative imagination so that mind extends through the body into hands and fingers, and even into tools which are their extensions. Thus, mind and creative imagination come into direct contact with the actual physical substance of tangible reality itself—wood, clay, fiber, glass, and, of course, metal. In the best instances, this linking is a poetic act that transforms our direct sensuous experience of the natural world into a world of culture, but maintains a connection to Nature via raw material.

There is a second difference between Craft and Design. The craftsman always ends with a finished original, a one-of-a-kind object. Such individuality occurs even when the craftsman makes several objects of the same type, as in a dinner service or a set of chairs; each object simply enlarges the set to which it belongs. This, however, is not the goal of the designer. Even though a design plan may be original and even unique, there seldom results an one-of-a-kind object—mass-production systems simply don't lend themselves to this. What does result from the design process is a very particular type of modern object, what I shall call the *multiple*. Multiples are something new to our age because they are different in both conception and reality from originals, from copies, and from reproductions. As we all know, an original is a unique, singular object. Copies and reproductions are related to originals and to each other, but they are not the same. A copy replicates in materials and appearance an original. A reproduction is a re-making of an original, though without absolute fidelity to the materials and appearance of the original, as in a photographic reproduction of a painting.

Copies and reproductions both depend on an original as their source, and thus always acknowledge the original and reaffirm its priority as both an object and as a philosophical concept. Multiples, by contrast, are related neither to originals nor to copies nor to reproductions. Nor is their existence predicated on the existence of an original object. Instead, they are conceived and produced with the idea that they will exist without an original object as their source.

It is this that makes multiples a phenomenon peculiar to the age of modern industrial production. Multiples emphasize conceptualization over materialization, calling into question our idea of an original object, both as a philosophical concept and as a tangible thing. Moreover, through the multiple, design embraces the concept of unlimited numbers of identical objects as opposed to

the singular, original object epitomized by the craft sensibility.

Taking all of this into consideration, it seems clear that the consequences of design go far beyond simply making craft objects more quickly and more economically. For, if craftsmanship (as opposed to "design-man-ship") is the ability to originate and create things by hand, then the craftsman must have a sense of how something should be and can be, based on an extensive knowledge of the properties of the material he or she is using. But this cannot occur unless the craftsman also has the requisite manual skill to work with the material in very subtle and sophisticated ways. While the designer should also understand the properties of materials, it is the knowledge of materials in relation to their "machine-ability" that is a pre-requisite.

Considering our increased material well-being in the wake of industrial production methods, it is not surprising that Design and the spirit of the machine have come to dominate our world view. Such an environment developed early in the twentieth century as our view of the world was increasingly shaped by the machine and, in turn, was shaped to reflect the values of industrial production methods.

By the late 1920s, machine styles like Streamlining appeared. Expressing a mass-production sensibility, Streamlining represents an aesthetic in which the traditional metaphorical value of the hand came to be regarded as something to be avoided as too slow, too individual, too expensive, and simply too old-fashioned. Handmade signaled the old world, while machine-made signaled the world of tomorrow. Streamlining was an attempt to express in visual form the inner driving forces of industrial-age technology through aerodynamic styling.

In its way, Streamlining, as a symbolic expression of the future, came to represent an aesthetic display of function by turning function into a sign, a sign that garnered metaphorical content and meaning from the increasingly large role played by machines in modern society. At the same time, the meaning contained in the act of "making" as a specific kind of activity of the skilled hand was undermined, as was the value of craft and the craftsmanship necessary to create one-of-a-kind objects.

Within this environment it not surprising that the relevance of craft to today's world has been questioned. So why am I arguing that craft still retains certain values that are important to modern industrial society? What are these values?

First of all, being handmade means craft objects maintain a relationship to the human hand that preserves their sense of handiness in use. For example, Rudolf Arnheim, a writer on the psychology of art, recalls a "cubic" coffeepot he encountered in a German cafeteria many years ago. Arnheim described it as a "monster to the eye" because its shape was geared, not for the human hand to use, but to a machine sensibility that prizes

In this environment it not surprising that the relevance of craft to today's world has been questioned. So why am I arguing that craft still retains certain values that are important to modern industrial society? What are these values?

Aldo Rossi
La Conica (coffee maker), 1984
chrome with copper bottom
mass-produced by the Alessi
Company in two heights:
9 1/4" and 11 1/4"

efficiency and practicality. This coffeepot was not shaped primarily for pouring, but for efficient stacking and storage on a counter.

Second, through the dialogical/dialectical process that is craftsmanship, the hand provides a basic measure of what constitutes the human in terms of scale and proportion. It provides an inherent, human sense of what is proper and fitting, a sense of propriety about how to be in the world that can't help but be different from one modeled after a mechanical-techno-scientific mentality.

Craft offers a genuine and relevant counterpoint to that sense of "limitlessness" that machine culture encourages—and by "limitlessness" I don't mean unlimited possibilities of the imagination, but of economic development, material consumption, and alienation from the natural world. Let me explain. Nineteenth-century German sociologist Georg Simmel noted that because machine-made objects have no interaction between human hand and material that would give them autonomy and a one-of-a-kind status, they do not stand before us as the reflection of a single maker's identity and an individual being's essence. In their "machine-made-ness," he argues, they just seem to exist, to be; they are what I have called multiples, objects without an origin(al), something mass-production, by definition, guarantees. To put it in more philosophical terms, we could say that in the pre-industrialized world, objects were not alienated from an origin; they were not reduced to signs without reference to the meaningful practice that produced them—they seemed to belong.

In this pre-industrial world, when one experienced a handmade object, one had an individual, autonomous experience that was a reflection of the object's autonomy as well as that of its maker. In the machine age this sense of autonomy tends to disappear, both from the object and our experience of it. Every machine multiple offers essentially the same experience to every viewer; there is no longer a *reciprocal relationship* between the handmade object, the maker, and the viewer; experience is flattened out, made uniform—this is standardization and multiplication in action.

Mies van der Rohe's *Barcelona* chair or Marcel Breuer's *Wassily* chair are both examples of multiples. In both, the complex interplay of hand, eye, and materials that are unified in the hand-crafted object are purposely suppressed. Both chairs "stand forth" as strictly machine-made objects by keeping workmanship hidden so as not to reflect an actual maker's identity. Mies's *Barcelona* chair is especially notorious in this sense; it is designed to appear as a completely mass-produced multiple but, in fact, requires a vast amount of skilled handwork in its welded and ground joints and the stitching of its leather cushions.

By suppressing the hand and hence the presence of individual spirit, such works intend to create an almost palpable sense of a perfect, utopian world of ideal entities that exist outside of history. Such a perfect world is predicated on entities that themselves exude a sense of timelessness in their purity and in their apparent resistance to decay and change—no sense of historical development, no sense of a process of making or forming, no sense of entropy or decay betrayed through material; each one is verifiably the same. An aura of otherworldly anonymity, of existence outside history must be created, something the presence of the hand of the maker would immediately disrupt.

Moreover, in the way craft objects capture the efforts of other human beings for us to see and comprehend, they reflect back to us our own efforts; they become mirrors by which to judge our own aspirations and possibilities as individual beings.

My point is not to call for the elimination of design, but to help us understand how our sense of the tangibility of the material world and the culture based on it has been dramatically altered so that "standing forth" in the old sense of the handmade craft object and in the new sense of the machine-made design object are vastly different propositions.

In the past the ability to create an object was a kind of wondrous act because of the struggle of the hand to wrest a realm of culture from the material realm of nature. In this world, the hand established limits and was limiting. This gave the hand and the

handmade special metaphorical qualities that the viewer understood and appreciated as part of a larger worldview.

Within the world of design and industrial production, the effort and skill necessary to bring objects into being simply loses its meaning because it is cut loose from this encounter between a maker's hand and material reality. This, I think, is too important a point to pass over lightly. Because craftsmanship depends on the hand, material must be worked in harmony with its inherent properties. Consequently, rather than an alienation between technique, material, and hand, in craftsmanship a respect develops for them that is, in a very real sense, captured in the craft object. And since this is a feature inherent in all craft objects worldwide, craft objects provide a standard for judging objects that transcends individual cultural horizons, a standard by which and against which made things and the raw material used to make them can be placed in a human perspective and be comprehended in human terms.

Moreover, in the way craft objects capture the efforts of other human beings for us to see and comprehend, they reflect back to us our own efforts; they become mirrors by which to judge our own aspirations and possibilities as individual beings. In doing this, they foster a world view that projects the creative imagination firmly within a humanly defined, a humanly scaled, and humanly understandable tangible reality.

As Simmel implies, in the Ancient world quantity, quality, and size of monuments was intended to impress the spectator in one sense or another, but always with the human body and skilled hand as referent, as gauge of the amount of effort expended to work the material and raise the monument. In this way the body was assured of its central and humanizing role in the world.

In the modern world quantity, quality, and size have broken free of such human dimensions, both in terms of effort expended and in scale. They have moved beyond human comprehension in terms of the hand and body into the realm of "limit-less-ness," a realm in which there is little to give an absolute perspective and value to things, to anchor them except their comparative size or price. As a result, most made things now tend to drift in a realm beyond our comprehension; they have value as commodities, but have little inherent value as made things.

My argument is that craft not only implies a specific way of making an object, but a special way of expressing one's *being* with and in the world. More importantly, this way of *being* is not restricted to the maker; it is not a feature hermetically sealed off in the craft object from other beings. Rather, it is open to any and every beholder of the object who attends closely enough to the object's objectness. When this happens, the object reflects back to us a deeper experience of effort, work, and skill, one that links the object to all other human efforts. In doing this, it sheds a different light onto the world, one that allows us to see and understand things differently.

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This essay is abridged from a talk delivered at the 2005 SNAG Conference in Cleveland, Ohio.

STUDIO

by Elizabeth McDevitt

Valentin Yotkov

"Just one train stop from Manhattan" the Old World merges with the twenty-first century in Valentin Yotkov's Brooklyn studio. 68 Jay Street, a cavernous warehouse building a block away from the East River, has a hundred stories to tell. Here in Brooklyn, where so many aspiring immigrants begin new lives, Vaentin Yotkov has created a new beginning, not only for himself, but for the hundreds of students who have passed through his door.

Valentin traces his roots to Bulgaria. Heirs to the ancient culture of the Thracians, Bulgarian artists have carried on an unbroken tradition of fine craftsmanship in the metal arts, within the strict boundaries of the old European guild system. At a young age, Valentin was introduced to members of the National Silversmiths Guild, who recognized his potential artistic talents. He was offered an apprenticeship with Alexander Raiev, a master silversmith who had been proclaimed a Living Treasure in Bulgaria. More than simply a teacher, Mr. Raiev became a dear friend and personal mentor for Valentin, so close to him that Valentin named his only son, Alexander, after his master. Upon completion of his training, Valentin himself became a master at age 22, the youngest member in the history of the Guild. Three years later he became its President.

While trained as a traditional silversmith, Valentin was largely self-taught in chasing and repoussé. Inspired by an in-depth study of the forms, shapes, and designs of the 2,500-year-old treasures found in his homeland, Valentin developed a series of tools with which he replicated the ancient technology that had become a lost secret to his contemporaries. The tools themselves are works of art, precisely fashioned and beautifully finished, each one made completely by hand. With them, the lost art of the ancient craftsmen is revealed.

Valentin's unique talents became widely recognized as he exhibited extensively, representing his country at international exhibitions in Moscow, Beijing, Mongolia, Tokyo, India, Greece, and Mexico. In 1990, however, at a critical point in his career, Valentin decided to leave the politically restrictive confines of Bulgaria to seek greater artistic freedom. While participating in an exhibition in New York, he decided to stay in the United States. In 1994, through the encouragement and supportive generosity of devoted friends and colleagues, Valentin opened his Jay Street studio in the Brooklyn neighborhood of DUMBO (Down Under the Manhattan Bridge Overpass).

Ten years ago this neighborhood, which is today a chic, up-market enclave of artists and trendy restaurants, was an affordable yet barren alternative to more expensive artists' neighborhoods in Manhattan. In Suite 501A, Valentin has transformed 850 square feet of empty space into a creative working environment perfectly suited to his needs as an artist and teacher.

Upon entering, one immediately senses that here is a working studio where art flourishes. Decorating the fourteen-foot-high walls are mementos of Valentin's artistic life in Bulgaria: paintings, photographs, and hundreds of working drawings of completed pieces. High on a wall overlooking the long tables where students work is a group of hand-raised vessels, reminding the visitor of Valentin's traditional background as a member of his guild. Lining the wall are the hundreds of stakes and hammers that produced these vessels. Most of these followed Valentin from his homeland; they are irreplaceable treasures, the tools of his lifetime's work.

Light pours into the room through huge, north-facing windows. The view from up here is typical of a warehouse district, not what most people would consider attractive, but it reveals an environment pulsing with energy. Energy is alive and contagious in the classroom as well. When everyone is working together, the ringing of metal on metal is constant, almost rhythmic. No one looks up. It is hard to stop when Valentin announces, "Now we will break for lunch." An old set of Bulgarian cow bells strung over the entrance to the studio is reserved to sound the friendly but final warning that no one will be allowed to continue working during lunchtime.

After lunch, the exotic smell of warm pitch fills the studio and the sound of the giant exhaust fan over the torches fills the room. There is never enough time to work, yet haste is not tolerated. Valentin's

left
Valentin Yotkov in front of the Brooklyn building that houses his metalsmithing studio
Photo: Billie Lim

careful and deliberate technique is nurtured in all of his students. With hearing so sensitive that he can hear when the metal is not struck correctly, Valentin patiently corrects the students and helps them with techniques that are to him second nature. "Don't abuse the metal," he says, "and it will go where you want it to go." When he demonstrates chasing and repoussé it looks easy. His hands move gracefully, with a fluid ease that is enviable and beautiful to watch, and always, in total control. The art of chasing and repoussé becomes "addictive," Valentin says. Indeed it does. Students return again and again, year after year, for classes and workshops. There is always more to learn from Valentin.

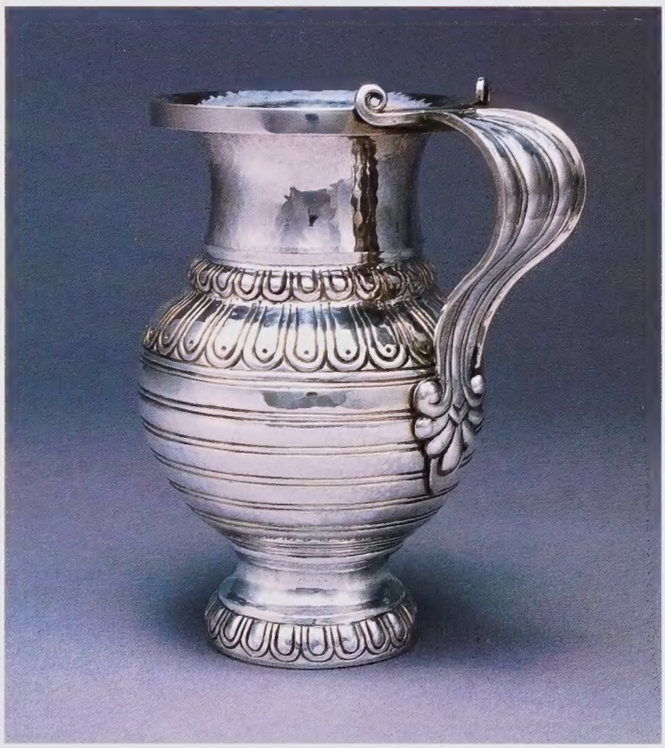
Seldom does a working artist devote the kind of time, dedication and patience to sharing his knowledge that Valentin does. He has his own work to produce as well. Much admired by numerous patrons and collectors who treasure his skills and the masterpieces that he produces, Valentin continues to execute graceful and beautifully decorated vessels, commemorative pieces, and most recently, jewelry.

This year Valentin celebrates his twenty-fifth anniversary as a master of his art. He has proven himself worthy of the knowledge, which was handed down to him through the Guild, both as an artist and a teacher. With that knowledge, the trust bestowed upon him to pass his skills onto others has been honored.

Elizabeth McDevitt is a goldsmith, metalsmithing teacher, and art historian residing in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

top to bottom
The raising section of Valentin Yotkov's Brooklyn studio

Interior of Valentin Yotkov's studio with student work tables in foreground



Valentin Yotkov
Thracian Jug, 2001
silver
4 3/4 x 3"
Photo: Plamen Petkov

VIEW

by Andrea DiNoto

New Generation Gallerists

What does it mean to be a gallerist today, especially one who deals exclusively in art jewelry? To find out, we investigated three twenty-first-century galleries in the United States launched by a new generation of dealers. We learned that they are carrying the jewelry field forward in highly personal ways, while acknowledging the importance of their forerunners, who helped establish the concept of jewelry as art. Many outstanding goldsmiths, whose work was first seen almost exclusively at juried craft shows in the 1970s, became gallery stars in the succeeding decades. As pioneering gallerists like Helen W. Drutt English and Susan Cummins installed jewelry as a prominent, if not exclusive, component of their establishments, the gallery scene found its footing and began to expand. While craft shows have grown huge, and increasingly commercial, galleries now provide an intimate alternative venue for both the casual retail buyer and the discerning collector, whose choices are often guided by the gallerist's vision. Aaron Faber in New York has been a notable mainstay since the 1980s, while Jewelers' Werk in Washington, D.C., Velvet da Vinci in San Francisco, Facere Jewelry Art Gallery in Seattle, and Objects of Desire in Louisville have prospered since opening in the early to mid 1990s. These and other fine galleries—notably the three profiled here—provide needed exposure for hundreds of artists, while bringing a greater international presence to the art jewelry marketplace.

"There's a difference between selling and repping," says Sienna Patti, owner of Sienna Gallery in Lenox, Massachusetts. "What's my responsibility? To represent all of the artist's work, not just a few pieces." Patti is speaking of her challenging role as a gallerist, which she embarked upon independently eight years ago at the tender age of 22, with a $15,000 bank loan. She could be speaking as well for the thirty-something owners of Ornamentum in Hudson, New York, and IMEC (International Metalsmith Exhibition Center) in Albuquerque, New Mexico; these galleries, like her own, are devoted exclusively to contemporary art jewelry. All three galleries were launched with a passionate dedication to and belief in the work they represent, and each reports keen collector interest and self-sustaining sales.

In a field that loves to argue over definitions, while grumbling about a "depressed" market, the gallerists interviewed for this article say that they are selling handmade and conceptual jewelry to a surprisingly diverse clientele, one that ranges, depending on the gallery, from youthful to middle-aged to even quite elderly (one of Patti's favorite customers is 98). Not surprisingly, customers are mostly women buying for themselves and looking for unique adornment, or couples in pursuit of unusual wedding rings, but overall, these individuals share one crucial characteristic: they are seeking jewelry not available in the mainstream, and, perhaps more to the point, they are open to learning about jewelry whose "intrinsic" value is based primarily on the artists' highly personalized design concepts, and secondarily—or sometimes not at all—on the worth of materials. It might be a sterling silver and glass necklace by Karen Gilbert at IMEC, or a Gerd Rothmann gold fingerprint ring at Ornamentum, or a steel and diamond Lola Brooks pendant at Sienna. Whatever the piece, gallerists stress the importance of presenting the work as art. None use conventional display supports associated, as Patti says, with "jewelry jewelry." Instead the work is usually shown flat in specially designed vitrines, or wall hung. IMEC's Luis Demetrio Lolasco mounts rings on wall panels, a separate one for each artist, while Ornamentum's Stefan Friedemann explains that his minimalist cases, custom-made in Germany, allow pieces to be put out on dark-stained ash wood, "like paintings."

But to sell jewelry as art, it is often not enough to simply let the work speak for itself. These young gallerists say they must be prepared to effectively communicate the work's esthetic, or "meaning" (often an uncanny layering of metaphor, irony, and technique)—to deconstruct it, so to speak—to a customer who might be a first-time walk-in drawn to a cutting-edge gallery setting or a return visitor responding to a mailing for a special exhibition, or someone visiting one of the mega craft shows, such as SOFA (the international exhibitions of Sculpture, Objects and Functional Art). The dialogue is an educational process that can be time-consuming

Stefan Friedemann and Laura Lapachin, co-owners of Ornamentum gallery

(Lomasco says he can easily spend a half an hour with each prospective customer) but it pays off in creating a knowledgeable clientele. At the same time, gallerists must also be able to communicate with the artists themselves, for whom representation and exhibitions provide not just validation of the work but a vitally important marketing venue.

Gallerists with a background in art and design—either hands-on or academic—are pre-eminently suited to the task of maintaining this dual creative dialogue that ultimately links the artist with the buyer. At the same time, a gallery's success is also dependant on its location—ideally in an area that draws a design-savvy public. Ornamentum's co-owners, Laura Lapachin and Stefan Friedemann, both Midwesterners, met while earning BFA degrees in Metals at Wayne State University in Detroit under the late professor Phillip Fike. "We traveled together to the jewelry capital of Germany, Pforzheim, where we studied design for three years," says Friedemann. When the couple returned to the United States, they settled first in Providence, Rhode Island, where they worked in the jewelry industry for two years while looking for a location to call home. A magazine story about the city of Hudson, in upstate New York, just two hours by train from Manhattan, intrigued them. Hudson's picturesque main drag, Warren Street, lined with nineteenth-century brick and frame buildings, was developing as a burgeoning center for antiques stores and art galleries and Lapachin and Friedemann were attracted to the European feel of the town. "In 2001, after September 11," says Friedemann, "we knew that we had better dive in because the demand for property here was bound to increase immensely. So we took all that we had saved and invested it into the building in which we live and have the gallery." Ornamentum opened in 2002 with an exhibition of the work of Scott Cormier, and subsequently, the couple has featured work by artists they met abroad, such as Silke Spitzer (who became their first "artist-in-residence" during the summer of 2004), Ruudt Peters, Gerd Rothmann, and the Vietnamese-born, German-trained artist Sam Tho Duong. "As a gallery of only three years, our focus is still developing," says Friedemann, "but as we find that our customers are increasingly interested in the more important one-of-a-kind pieces, we are able to focus more on these works, which is what most stimulates us."

Lolasco and Patti have differing arts backgrounds, but both opened galleries on their home turf—fortuitous decisions in both

clockwise from top left
Interior of Ornamentum in Hudson, New York

Gerd Rothmann
Friends, Aquaintances and Relatives
(necklace), 2003
silver, gold
diameter 8 1/4"
Photo: Wilfried Petzi

Luis Demetrio Lolasco, director of IMEC
(International Metalsmith Exhibition Center)

Karen Gilbert
Ice (bracelet), 2005
sterling silver, Pyrex glass
diameter 4"
Photo: Amy Fronckiewicz

Interior of IMEC in Albuquerque, New Mexico

cases. Lolasco, like Lapachin and Friedemann, trained as a jeweler, studying Small Metals at the University of New Mexico and taking semesters at Rhode Island School of Design. A native of Albuquerque, he worked in retail at the local Crate & Barrel store for two years before opening IMEC in 1999. "Albuquerque is one of the biggest suppliers of metals, stones, and findings in the country," he says, "but there wasn't an outlet in New Mexico representing more progressive jewelers." Lolasco virtually staked out the market, establishing his gallery in Albuquerque's artsy Nob Hill neighborhood, filled with boutiques and coffee houses. He now represents about 85 jewelers, "all metalsmiths, of which about a third are local." Lolasco's artists are from the United States, Europe, Canada, and Mexico, and include people he's found at craft shows, "hiding in studios and at small, random, obscure festivals," and by reading about them, and online. Although "production but untraditional" wedding rings comprise about 70 percent of his business, they occupy only a small portion of the 800-square-foot gallery where display cases designed like biology specimen desks hold sculptural pieces by Karen Gilbert, Todd Reed, Ford & Forlano (the team of Steven Ford and David Forlano), and other contemporary artists. Lolasco says that his gallery attracts a very youthful clientele, people in their twenties and thirties and "a huge group of local artists," but also buyers who make the hour-long trek south from Santa Fe, and from Taos, where art galleries (and tourists) proliferate, but galleries like his are non-existent.

Similarly, Lenox, Massachusetts, the location of Sienna Gallery, is a long-established tourist mecca in the heart of the Berkshires and home to the renowned Tanglewood music festival, which draws hordes of visitors in July and August. Lenox is chock-a-block with boutiques, restaurants, and art galleries—Patti's is unique among them—that thrive on the summer tourist trade and cater to a population of second-home owners, weekenders, and locals, typically in their fifties and sixties. When Patti opened her gallery in 1998, she became the youngest business owner in town. Patti, who lives in nearby Pittsfield, where she grew up, says it just "felt right" to set up shop on her home turf. Patti was born into an intense artistic milieu, the daughter of prominent glass artist Tom Patti and his wife and partner Marilyn Holtz Patti. At New York University she double majored in Theatre/Film Direction and Art History, and in 1995 began working at the Metropolitan Museum of Art as assistant to the curator of Twentieth Century American Decorative Arts. This experience focused her interest on handmade work by contemporary artists, particularly jewelry. "I was always interested in jewelry and costume and in the philosophy behind wearing it," she says. "Jewelry always seemed to be pushing boundaries, the most challenging [of the decorative arts]." However, she says, "I have no interest in making. There are so many people who do it better." When she first moved back to Berkshire County she worked for the Berkshire Center for Contemporary Glass. "I developed the visiting artist demonstration series and managed the gallery," she says, before deciding to go launch herself in the gallery world. Patti says she always liked the idea of having her own business and plunged in when a suitable space became available in Lenox. Today Patti represents a roster of 30 emerging and established American and international artists, including Johan van Aswegen, Giampaolo Babetto, Anton Cepka, Giovanni Corvaja,

clockwise from left
Tina Rath
Tunicate Brooch, 2005
18k gold, mink, silver, pearls
2 x 2 x 2 1/2"

Interior of Sienna Gallery in Lenox, Massachusetts

Sienna Patti, owner of Sienna Gallery

Robert Ebendorf, Noam Elyashiv, Donald Friedlich, Alyssa Dee Krauss, Jacqueline Lillie, Tina Rath, and Barbara Seidenath. Her business has evolved to the point where she now supports her artists with grants and awards, including the Sienna Gallery Award, given bi-annually to "an emerging artist showing merit, skill and innovation in their work." Patti gives the artist a solo exhibition and a monetary gift—recent winners were Lola Brooks and Melanie Bilanker.

Exhibitions are important, not just because they support deserving artists; they also help define a gallery's identity, thus establishing it as a destination for continually exciting work. For this reason alone, gallerists consider the cost and planning efforts that go into their shows an investment in their gallery's future. Ornamentum has increased its exhibitions since opening. "In our first year we had one," says Friedemann, "and in our third year we are having four." Lolasco used to do four or five exhibitions a year but now does only an annual holiday show. "I'm taking a break because it takes so much time and energy" he says.

Gallerists must also weigh the pros and cons of exhibiting annually off site, primarily at SOFA, in one or more of its three venues—New York, Chicago, and Palm Beach. The expense of participating is offset by the opportunity SOFA offers to expose a gallery to a wider public, create word-of-mouth, and bring certain artists to greater prominence. In Chicago in 2005, both Sienna Gallery and Ornamentum (in its debut as a participant) arranged to have selected jewelry artists speak as part of the well-attended lecture series. Lolasco, however, has so far opted out of SOFA, reasoning that his time is better spent focusing on his local clientele. "The Albuquerque area is quickly growing and has a vast client potential," he says, "and I want to take advantage of this aspect."

In their vitally important role as educators, gallerists also extend their reach by bringing design students directly to their galleries. Eventually, Lolasco wants enough space for seminars and demonstrations. "I work with about six different design schools and universities," he says, "bringing students, 15 to 30 at a time, on tours, providing information and contacts with other metalsmiths, and technical information." Sienna Gallery and Ornamentum do likewise, and Patti has plans to begin publishing catalogs, something she's always wanted to do. "I really feel there needs to be documentation for students to look at the work," she says, noting that it's much more commonly done in Europe.

Susan Cummins, who in 1997 founded the Art Jewelry Forum, a collectors' group that promotes art jewelry, closed her Mill Valley gallery a few years ago after 25 years in the business, and calls these small, new galleries "a breath of fresh air" for the way in which they have brought together work from Europe and America that is being curated with a strong point of view. Cummins applauds their "energy and enthusiasm, and new ideas," citing as one example Sienna's emerging artist competition, whose monetary award "is fantastic, unexpected for a dealer. We didn't do that." Cummins says that the field of art jewelry has expanded a great deal in the last decade. "When I first started at SOFA," she says, "few people were showing jewelry. That's changed dramatically. Now there's quite a few not only from America but all over the world." Another important change, she says, is the ability of these galleries to do business through e-mail and the Internet, enabling them to operate from a relatively small home base while maintaining relationships with buyers and collectors wherever they may be.

For all the complexity of the gallerist's job—equal parts nurturer, educator, entrepreneur, and impresario—one aspect trumps all others. Charon Kransen, the influential private dealer credited with bringing many new names in the jewelry field to America from Europe, and whom Patti cites as her mentor, puts it this way: "Sienna came to me and I gave her a reality check. I told her that people doing this kind of pioneering work have to follow their own instincts and style. You live and you show your vision." Kransen applies this dictum to artists as well, encouraging them not to play it safe, but to "use their God-given talent and trust that it will be recognized. The mainstream doesn't serve us."

"...people doing this kind of pioneering work have to follow their own instincts and style. You live and you show your vision."

Such advice resonates for the owners of Sienna Gallery, Ornamentum and IMEC, all of whom have committed to selling only work they believe in but, Patti admits, "it sometimes gets frustrating" when artists don't take risks. "Jewelry needs to have potency in order to make people see it," she says. Making people see is, after all, the gallerist's bottom line, choosing what is worthy from a growing number of international artists eager for exposure. "We are open to many styles," says Friedemann, "as long as it is personal to the artist and exciting to us." Because, ultimately, he adds, "a gallery is a reflection of the opinions of the people running it." It is also an all-consuming way of life. As Patti says, "This is a career, a vocation, a calling. If you don't see it in that way, how can you do it?"

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What the Body Knows

The Evolution of Heather White van Stolk

by Patricia Harris and David Lyon

Heather White van Stolk is not just a master metalsmith—over the last decade she has also proven herself a master of transformation. By pushing formal constructs from the metals heritage to their physical and logical limits, she has imbued familiar forms with fresh nuances of meaning. Her newest work takes the re-formation even further by reinventing the body on the path to what might be called "corporal enlightenment."

Until this latest series, which is still very much in progress, White van Stolk labored in what she calls the "noble tradition" of metal crafts. "As a maker, I come from a craft perspective," she explains. "I look at functional objects, ceremonial objects, things you touch, things that identify who you are. I love to render objects. I find complete bliss in the physical manipulation."

But the immersion in forms drawn from the long decorative arts tradition shouldn't suggest that busy hands spell an idle mind. Indeed, one of the signature characteristics of White van Stolk's mature work has been its intellectual content. For example, any given piece from her "Protean Cameo" brooch series is a clever reinvention of the cameo with the female silhouette as a negative outline within a metal shield. The woman in question becomes a receptacle for White van Stolk's symbols of femininity.

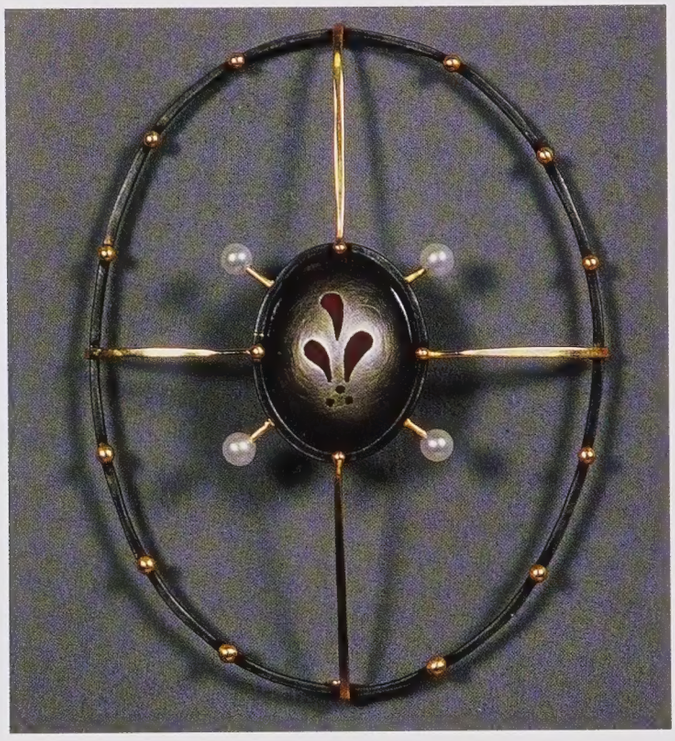
The cameos as a group have a second life as an argument as well as a collection of objects. The full impact of the "Protean Cameo" series emerges in the aggregate, where the artist's distortions of the neoclassical female silhouette metaphorically demonstrate a flexible vision of femininity containing, as in *#7*, a pregnant ewer, or, as in *#9*, a tree of life. (White van Stolk fed the basic silhouette into a computer graphics program and explored distortions by expanding and contracting the various axes.) White van Stolk's immersion in the world of metalsmithing also enables her to have it both ways: the series constitutes a rigorous critique of cultural stereotypes, while each brooch continues to exist as a non-ironic piece of beautiful jewelry, quite separate from its role in the rhetorical argument.

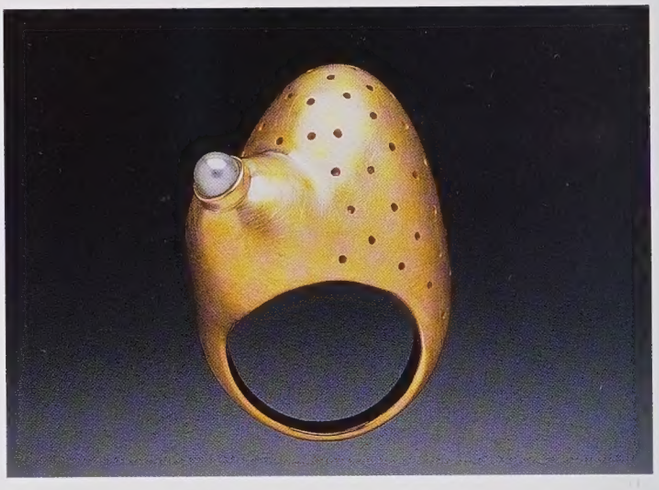
Illumination from
"Retractable Crown" series, 2001
brass, steel
crown: 9 x 18"
Photo: Tim Safranek

White van Stolk is not one to get stuck in monomania. At any given moment, she is simultaneously engaged in several, often complementary, intellectual inquiries. The "Retractable Crown" and "Cassinian Oval" series, for example, overlap with the cameos.

The literal "Retractable Crown" forms are suspended from wall-mounted scissors arms,

Eight Marks of Beauty, 2004
22k gold
dimensions variable
Photo: Dean Powell





Clockwise from top

Protean Cameo #9, 2000
22k, 18k, sterling silver
2 1/8 x 2 1/8 x 1/2"
Photo: Kyle Dick
Courtesy of Mobilia Gallery

Cassinian Oval #3, 1999
18k, sterling, rose petals, wood
2 7/8 x 2 1/8 x 1/2"
Photo: Kyle Dick

Encroachment Ring #2, 2001
18k gold, pearl
1 1/2 x 1 x 3/4"
Photo: Dean Powell

Encroachment Ring #3, 2001
18k gold, iolite
1 1/2 x 1 1/4 x 3/4"
Photo: Dean Powell

Cassinian Oval #6, 2000
18k gold, sterling, steel, pearls, velvet
2 3/4 x 2 1/8 x 1/2"
Photo: Kyle Dick

as if sovereignty might be extended or withdrawn according to circumstances. White van Stolk terms the crowns "visual metonymies," that is, images where a signifying characteristic stands in for the whole. More fanciful than the cameos in the directness of their narrative, they represent illustrations of aspects of sovereignty rather than a critique, per se, of the concept. The visually rich series incorporates such signifiers as a spiked fence around a patch of turf (*Domain*), the rich curves of a baroque chandelier (*Illumination*), chopped books (*Knowledge*), and the classic northern European crown, but rendered in lead rather than gold (*Burden*). Ironically, the base metal seems intuitively heavy (i.e., a burden), but the same volume of gold would, in fact, weigh 70 percent more.

The crowns mark a logical conclusion to White van Stolk's period of manipulating traditional metal forms to twist new meaning from them. They also mark the beginning of a new tendency in White van Stolk's work: the evocation of alternate realities, fictive worlds of an implied but unspecified narrative. While working on the crowns, she says, she was engrossed in the magical realism of Gabriel García Márquez's seminal novel, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, and in the paintings of Frida Kahlo.

One is likely to ask of the crowns not what they "mean"—but who would wear them? While the negative space of the cameos suggests a person, the crowns have no one to wear them. But absence implies presence. In effect, the crowns inject character into the artistic narrative. The whimsical crowns have an appealing directness, but they fell short of White van Stolk's aspirations. "I was looking for more magic, more poetry in my work," she says.

Perhaps ironically, she found magical narrative in abstract geometry. Extrapolating from her distortions of the cameo figures, White van Stolk began to explore the peculiar natural forms known as Cassinian ovals. It marks a departure in her work from the rigid Ideal forms described in ancient geometry and thought by early philosophers to be the physical manifestations of a higher plane of existence.

The ovals are named for their discoverer, Italian-born French astronomer Jean-Dominique Cassini (1625-1712), and they express his mathematical descriptions of the orbits of planets and moons. Although it would take nearly another century for the intellectuals of the Enlightenment to realize the full implications, Cassini's discovery that the universe was, by nature, asymmetrical spelled the philosophical death knell for forms that were, in Platonic philosophy, manifestations of the world of Ideals. (Plato stated flatly that only the circle, square, and triangle existed.) Cassini's discovery undermined the central tenets of classical philosophy and helped lay the groundwork for phenomenological investigation.

...White van Stolk turned to the smaller scale of the ring to instigate a narrative sequence of abstract forms that mime life as opposed to mathematical or philosophical perfection.

A Cassinian oval is asymmetrical, like a hen's egg. White van Stolk made the distortions more apparent in some brooches than others, but they all share certain characteristics: a central object (the "planet") surrounded by one or more oval rings. (The division between the rings of Saturn is called the Cassini division.) But within those formal constraints, she experimented with a variety of ways to suspend the central planet and chose to employ quotidian materials (wood covered with rose petals, fur, velvet studded with pearls, painted carved wood) in the center of the composition.

An understanding of the histories of astronomy, mathematics, and philosophy is not essential to appreciate the sheer artistry of the brooches. White van Stolk's propensity for extrapolation from a broader concept would come to serve her well when she began working with forms drawn directly from the human body.

White van Stolk subjects her work to constant intellectual scrutiny. "There's always some sort of ideological inquiry going on," she admits. "I enjoy questioning." But what makes her an artist rather than a critic is that she poses the questions in metal. As an answer to the disconnectedness of the suite of ovals and the literal-mindedness of the crowns, White van Stolk turned to the smaller scale of the ring to instigate a narrative sequence of

abstract forms that mime life as opposed to mathematical or philosophical perfection.

Each "Encroachment" ring has an aesthetic life on its own, but the whole story emerges in the full set of these eruptive shapes. The sequence begins with an ovoid—viewed from the side in two dimensions, it is a Cassinian oval. Only a regular dimpling of the surface marks the form as part of the organic world, rather than the abstract world of ideal forms.

In *Encroachment #2*, a bud appears on the side, also reaching up to the light. (It resembles a mature corm or tuber forming a daughter shoot.) Already graced with a tiny pearl at the top of the swelling, the second bulge appears very breast-like. True to the title of the series, it nudges up against the adjoining finger.

Encroachment #3 makes the breast form explicit, with three symmetrical breasts tipped with iolite nipples. The bumps just kept coming, with rings of four and five protuberances, each encroaching more on the hand than the one before it. Taken together, they present a time-lapse sequence of the growth of a single organism.

In addition to fashioning alternatives to Platonic forms in the "Encroachment" rings, White van Stolk also made a direct critique of the Platonic form of the circle in her "Circle Ring" series. Taken as a group, the rings are virtuoso demonstrations of small-scale engineering. Each is a decorated hoop looped on a ring. The hoop rolls onto the finger when the wearer dons the ring. One hoop is covered with fur (*Pet*). Another contains a model of a circus acrobat's rolling wheel (*Circus*), while yet another (*Pearls*) is a band of parallel strands of pearls, like a choker for the finger. Whimsical and kinetic, they read almost as *bon mots* tossed off in the midst of dramatic discourse—disarming the circle form's pretense of perfection.

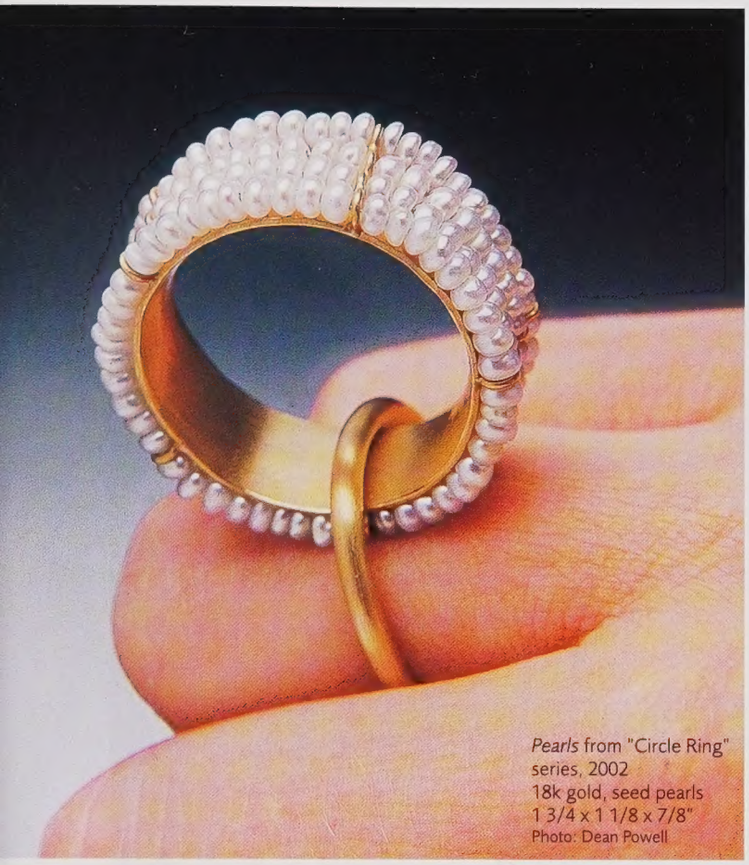
A looser sequence of rings from the same time weds the simple wit and surprise of *Circle* with a more formal construction. *Ring Consuming a Pearl* is a classic cup with a tiny pearl at the center, as if it were swirling down a drain. *Ring Concealing Pearls* offers essentially the same form, but with a border of tiny pearls hidden beneath the outer lip. *Ring with Appendage* attaches a pearl to a stud mounted on the underside of the ring, hidden in the wearer's palm. Rather than a simple round finger hole, each is penetrated with a Cassinian oval, raised on the top and flattened on the bottom. This makes these fairly weighty rings fit more snugly.

The sheer craftsmanship of the "Encroachment" rings and others from the same period must have given White van Stolk the metalsmith great pleasure. But she also recognizes that it is possible to overwork a piece. "Craftsmanship is important," she says, "but sometimes I think I make something so perfect that I kill whatever spirit it had. That's why the 'Imperfection' series was so important to me."

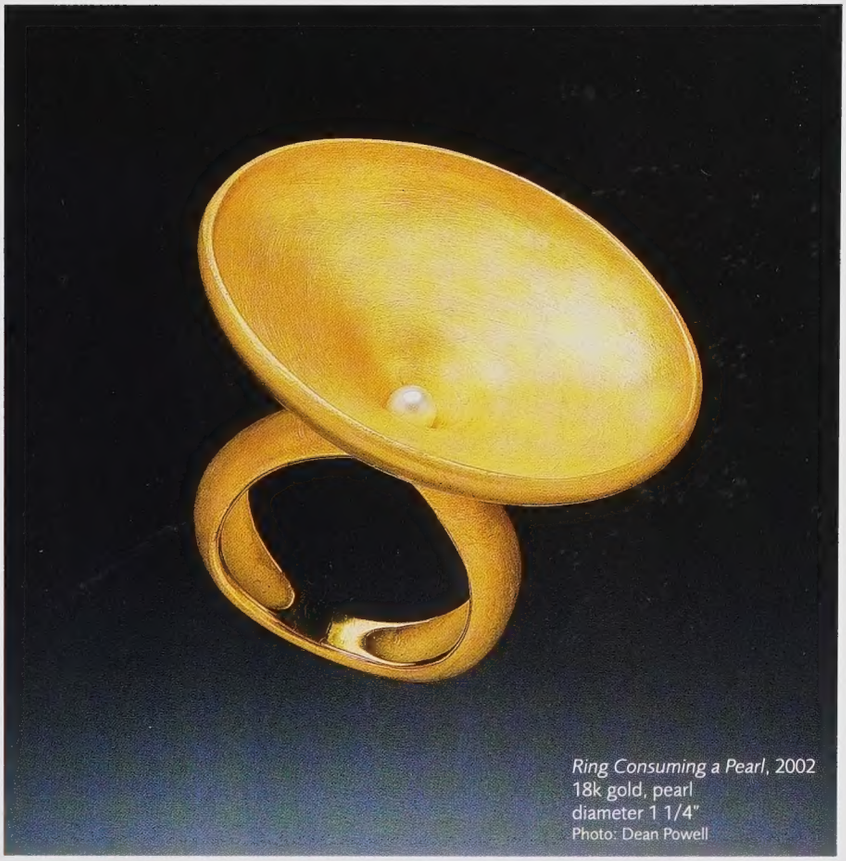
A sea change was forming in White van Stolk's work as she pondered the possibility that the imperfections of the natural world might, in fact, be more beautiful than the perfect forms of artifice.

Beginning in 2002, White van Stolk departed further from classical traditions in metal to discover a different approach to beauty through a series she entitled—bluntly enough—"Study of Imperfection." Key to each piece in the series is an imperfect, often lumpy, stone with pocks and flakes, cracks and irregularities. White van Stolk set each one as part of a sequence of gold castings that faithfully reproduced the faults of the original, essentially creating an apotheosis of the humble and the flawed. Ironically, the "perfect" reproduction in gold highlights the textural and light-reflecting peculiarities of the original stone, making it all the more beautiful. White van Stolk was consciously working against her own metalsmithing skill. "I really freed up when I worked on that series," she says. A sea change was forming in White van Stolk's work as she pondered the possibility that the imperfections of the natural world might, in fact, be more beautiful than the perfect forms of artifice.

Following workshops with Ruudt Peters and Fillipine de Haan in the spring of 2003, White van Stolk began to reevaluate her approach to jewelry. As she grappled with how to use an ever-growing collection of botanical specimens that she had been gathering in walks near her home in Boston, White van Stolk hit upon the most basic and primal human interaction with found objects: she began adorning herself with them. "So much of

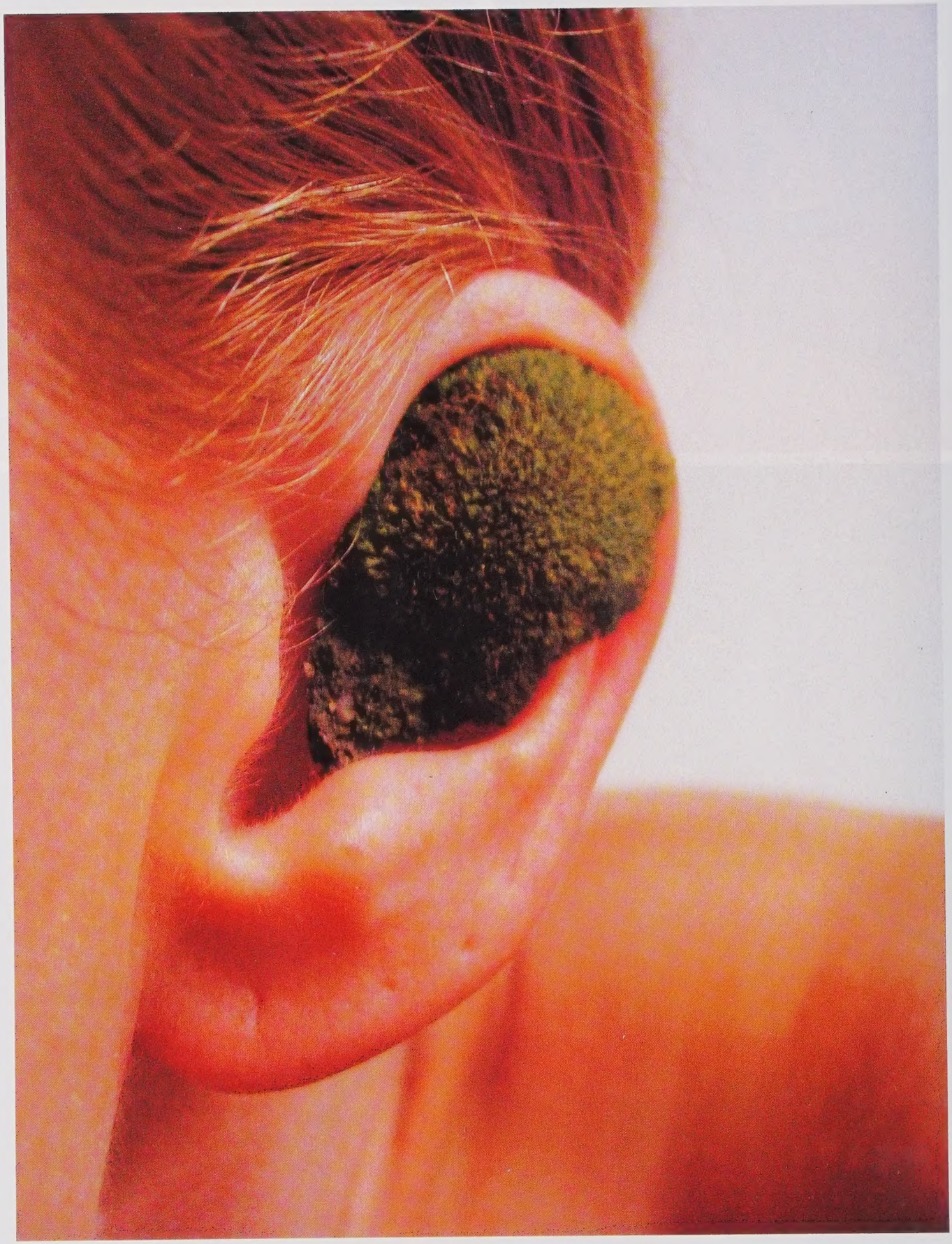


Pearls from "Circle Ring" series, 2002
18k gold, seed pearls
1 3/4 x 1 1/8 x 7/8"
Photo: Dean Powell



Ring Consuming a Pearl, 2002
18k gold, pearl
diameter 1 1/4"
Photo: Dean Powell

#2 from "Study of Imperfection" series, 2002
18k gold, cavansite
2 x 1 1/2 x 1/2"
Photo: Dean Powell



#8 (Ear Moss) from
"One minute piece of
jewelry" series, 2004
digital print
8 x 10"

#5 (Daisy Mouth) from "One minute piece of jewelry" series, 2004
digital print
8 x 10"

Did the composition or the concept make it jewelry? Which was the focus—the adornment of the body, or the body as adorned?

jewelry is from nature," she says. "It just made sense to put these things on my body."

She also began to photograph these ephemeral adornments—a mouth full of flower petals, an ear full of moss, a hatched robin's egg resting on her pregnant belly. She found the experience gratifying in its immediacy in comparison with the long hours at the bench to craft a piece in metal. 'There was a sensuality and lusciousness that I want my jewelry to have that I was able to obtain quickly with photos," White van Stolk says.

For an avowed maker of objects—an artisan working deliberately in the traditions of metal—the creation of jewelry that lasts only long enough to document with photographs raises interesting questions. Did the composition or the concept make it jewelry? Which was the focus—the adornment of the body, or the body as adorned? Was she making temporal jewelry or performance art? Would it exist at all without the documentation? They are questions that viewers must answer for themselves. Rather than offer pat answers, White van Stolk says, "I'd prefer to be provocative and get a reaction."

The conjunctions between her own body and botanical detritus were ephemeral, but her body, she realized, offered its own possibilities as a source of imagery. She made alginate molds of teeth, body fragments, and patches of skin, then cast the molds in wax. This gave her a new vocabulary of forms that were simultaneously intimate and yet abstracted by having been removed from their *in vivo* context. "I never went through a figural stage as a student," she muses. "Now I'm heading in personal territory. It's exciting."

Alginate is most commonly used for castings to create dental prosthetics. It renders a finely detailed copy, right down to crinkling and striations on the skin. White van Stolk's initial explorations of the material, logically enough, focused on castings of her and her husband's teeth. Working from the wax replicas, she arranged large blossoms where each petal was a

Chrysanthemum Brooches, 2004
polyurethane, fine sliver, nickel silver
each 3 x 3 x 1 1/2"
Photo: Dean Powell

they are ritualized. Without ritual, deconstruction of the human form equals disembodiment.

As she explores the formal possibilities of the fragmented human figure, White van Stolk ritualizes the castings through repetition of forms and through compositions that transform fragments into pieces of a new gestalt. The primal and mysterious navel is also an intrinsically humorous body part. White van Stolk's *Corsage Brooch: Trumpet Flower* consists of eight navel castings attached to a central form with coiled springs that allow them to wriggle and jiggle. The whimsy tends to neutralize the recoil of some viewers upon realizing that the graceful blossom forms are, in fact, White van Stolk's own belly button.

As she explores the formal possibilities of the fragmented human figure, White van Stolk ritualizes the castings through repetition of forms and through compositions that transform fragments into pieces of a new gestalt.

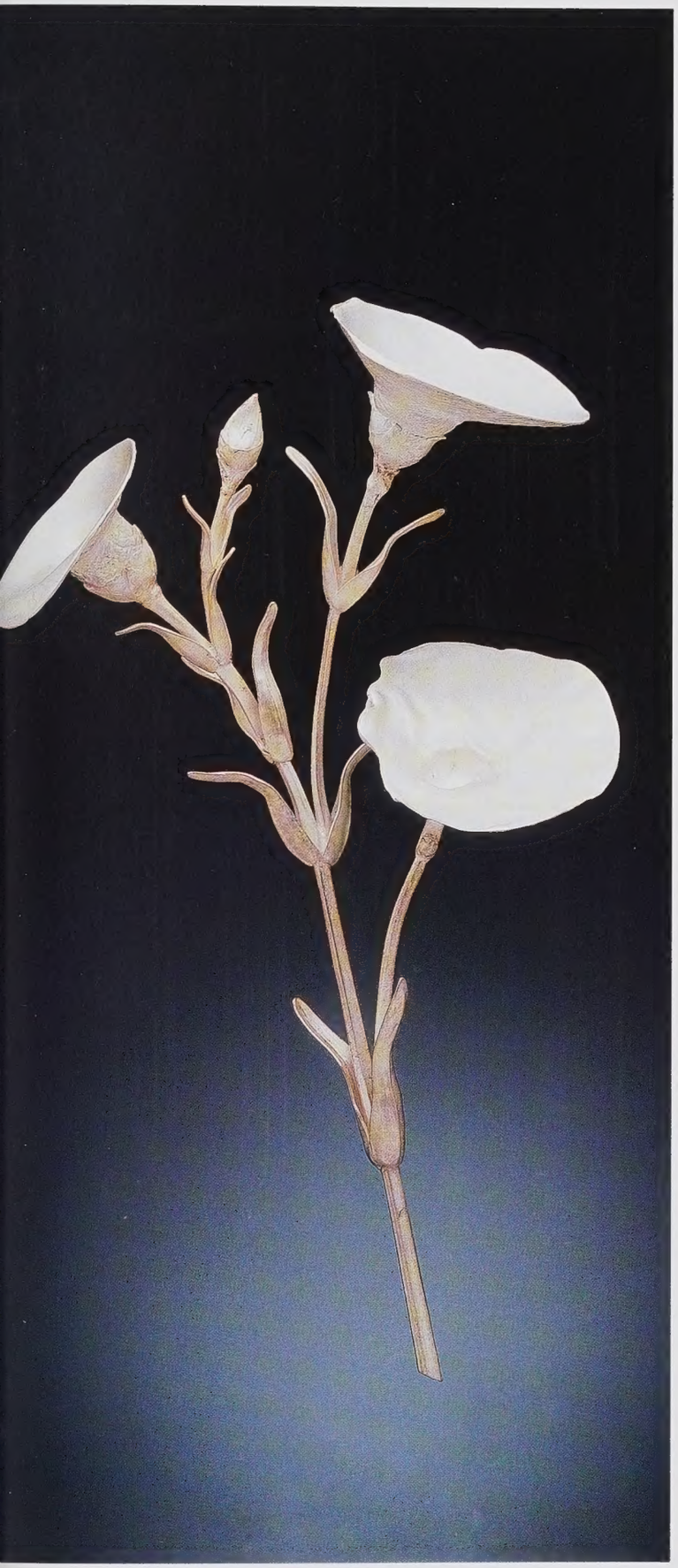
wax tooth. Realizing that the brooches would be too heavy to wear if she cast them in metal, she learned to work with polyurethane, adding bright, pastel pigments to the plastic in its liquid stage. She then mounted the polyurethane castings on silver frames with pin backs. The resulting "Chrysanthemum Brooches" are surprisingly light and durable. People are drawn to the bright, sherbet-like palette and playful form—yet often become uncomfortable once they recognize the source of the imagery.

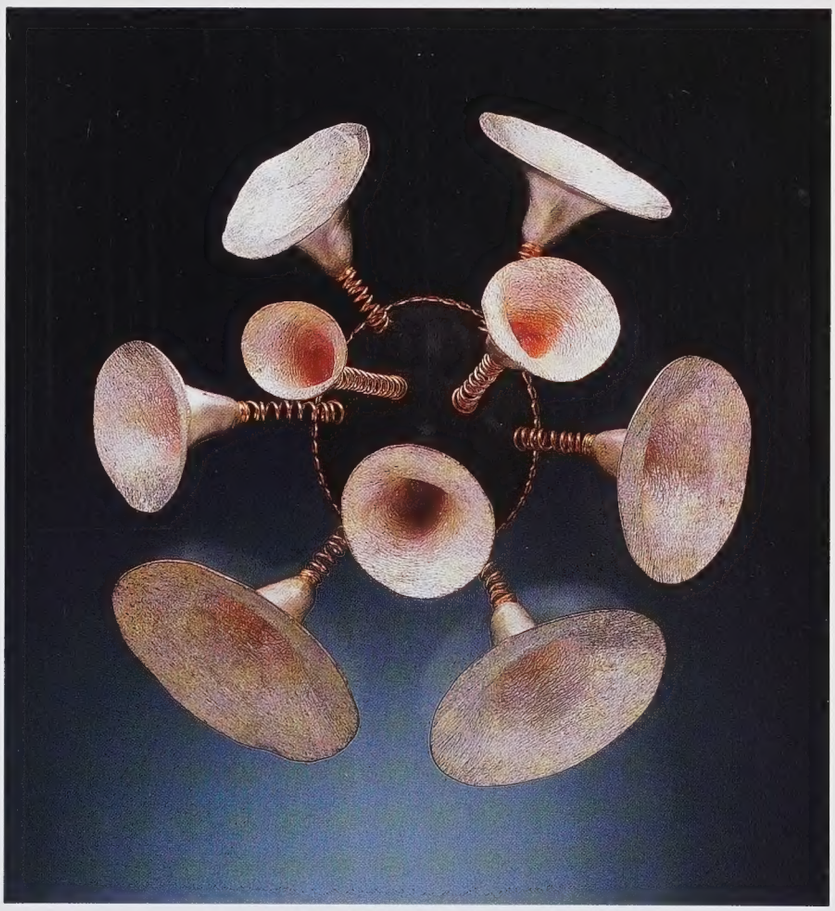
White van Stolk's body casting jewelry is frank in its confrontation. While body parts have a long history in sentimental jewelry—the locket of hair, the twined hair of mourning jewelry, the fashioning of once-magical milagros into ornament—there is also a fiercer, more grotesque side of body-part ornament associated with sympathetic magic. From ancient times, warriors and hunters assumed the power of their enemy or quarry—or demonstrated their dominance—by wearing necklaces of ears or teeth (bear teeth, shark teeth, or the mandibles of the vanquished), or carrying a string of scalps on their belts. In contemporary Western culture, we tend to view these magical manifestations with horror and disgust—unless

Corsage Brooch: Black Eyed Susan eschews silliness in favor of formal, recognizable pattern. The sterling petal forms of the "flower" brooch are castings of White van Stolk's own closed eye. Similarly, *Corsage Brooch: Milk Flower* is intimate family jewelry crafted in the classical shape of a flower brooch. The three open blossoms on the stem are castings of one of White van Stolk's nipples, one of her mother's, and one of her grandmother's. The closed bud on the stem represents her then-unborn daughter.

In contrast with these honeyed images, White van Stolk also undertook a series that she calls *Eight Marks of Beauty*, which are gold replicas of moles and other irregularities on the skin of friends and acquaintances. Grainy and irregularly shaped, they have surprising textural variation. Each 22k gold beauty mark has a tack-pin on the back so it can be worn as a badge of defiance against the norms of perfection. Proving that beauty can indeed be skin deep, they represent White van Stolk's latest brief against polish, perfection, and Platonic Ideals: In the final analysis, imperfection *is* beauty. It's something the body has known all along.

Critics **Patricia Harris** and **David Lyon** write from Cambridge, Massachusetts.





wise from above

lower:
ge Brooch, 2004
g silver
1/2 x 1 1/2"
Dean Powell
ion of Marion Fulk

Black Eyed Susan:
Corsage Brooch, 2004
sterling silver, polyurethane
5 1/2 x 5 1/2 x 1"
Photo: Dean Powell
Collection of Susan Beech

Trumpet Flower:
Corsage Brooch, 2004
22k gold, sterling, nickel silver
4 1/2 x 4 x 2 "
Photo: Dean Powell
Collection of Susan Beech

Bettina Speckner

Deliberations and Negotiations

by Kate Wagle

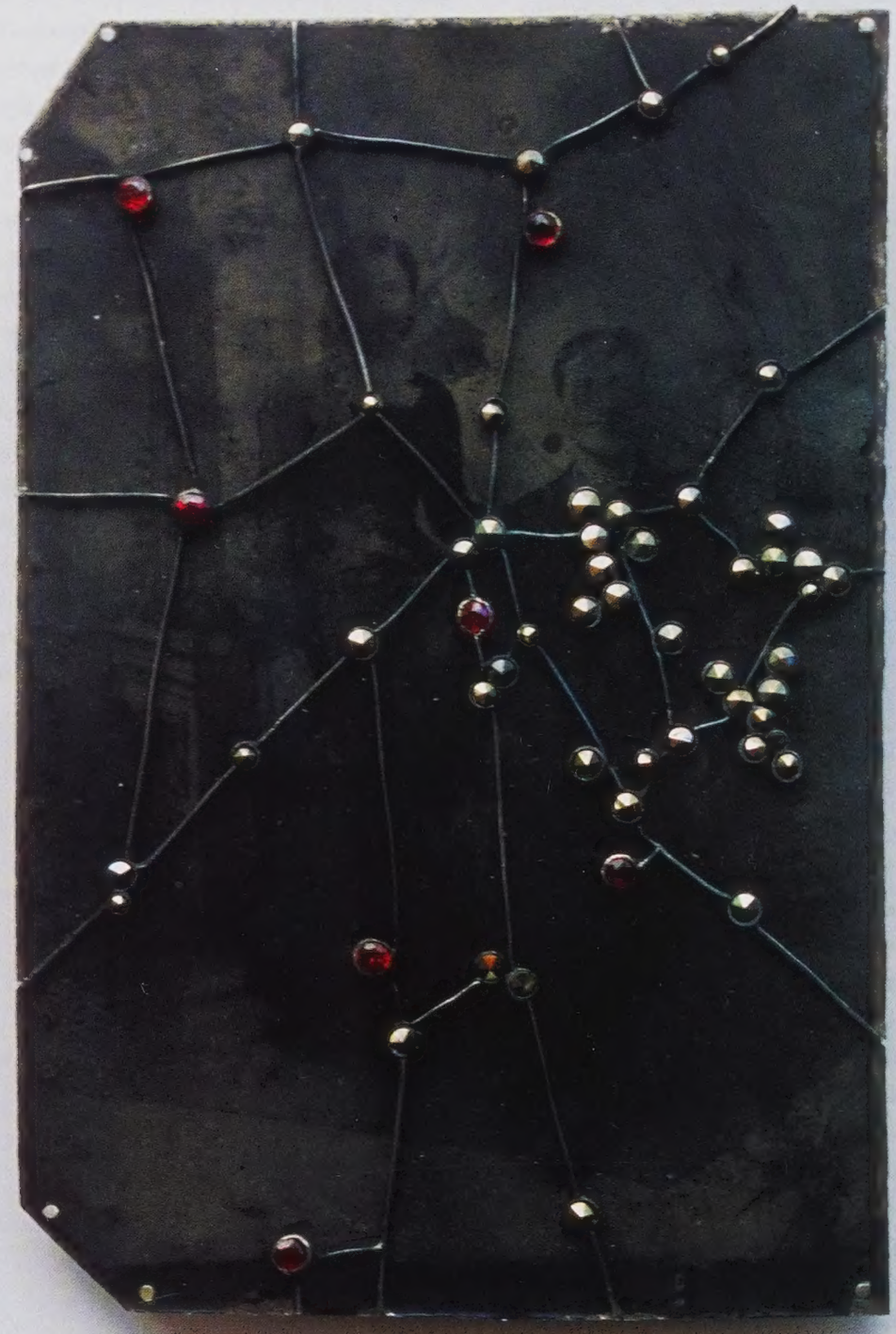
Bettina Speckner doesn't like to talk about her work. When pressed, she speaks of process, or of the parts that compose the whole, in terms of universals of form, color, and structure. Not an unusual response from a jeweler, except that most of Speckner's work involves mediation of psychologically super-charged photographic images, preciously worked materials, and carefully considered comments on adornment. Photographs inevitably invite speculation and interpretation and each piece offers seductive opportunities to communicate narrative or suggest emotional content. However, in most of the work the image is her subject only as it functions related to its own disruption and abstraction.

Speckner describes her involvement with each new collection of objects and materials as an objective and "virginal" approach to process. That self-description resonates in curious ways with Speckner's working environment. The town of Ubersee sits in an orderly and pretty South German landscape, pierced everywhere by the spires of its intensely Catholic history and shadowed by the looming Bavarian Alps. The area is a famously conservative region concentrated around Chiemsee Lake. Another nearby lake is the site of Neuschwanstein Castle. The fancifully turreted, mock-medieval structure was built in the nineteenth century by the tormented, homosexual King Ludwig II. It is the model for the Disney castle that has framed the entry to Fantasyland in Anaheim, California since the early 1950s.

Untitled (brooch), 2005
ferrotype, photo in enamel, silver

Speckner might refer to her environment as "normal" with the same simplicity that she defines her work as "formal." A newcomer to Ubersee is hard-pressed to avoid the rich strata of cultural drama revealed with each new view—and similarly challenged to ignore the complex allusions implied in Speckner's jewelry. A graduate of the Munich Academy of Art and a student of both Hermann Jünger and Otto Kunzli, Speckner has a sophisticated understanding of visual issues. Her determined innocence is a carefully considered methodology. The work springs from a purposeful, if provisional, asceticism, yet it's clear that visual history and theoretical conjectures are operating in the process. It is safe to say that Speckner's work participates in an expansive, but appreciably European conversation. Dada's democratization of objects and media, the formal prerogatives of constructivist collage, the discipline and material awareness of minimalist purity, the rigor of post-modern self-consciousness—all have corresponding points in Speckner's adornment.

Bettina Speckner's jewelry production consists of three overlapping investigations. One group can be described as response to found photographic imagery (nineteenth-century ferrotypes), a second builds around and into Speckner's own photographs (primarily landscape or environment), and a third seems a pure and self-contained investigation of new relationships of forms and materials related to adornment.



Untitled (brooch), 2005
ferrotype, silver, markasite, rubies
approx. 3 1/2 x 3 3/8"

Untitled (brooch), 2003
ferrotype, silver, turmalines
approx. 3 1/2 x 3 3/8"

The photographically based work, particularly those pieces that incorporate portrait ferrotypes, reflect Speckner's primary struggle with the inherent authority of the photograph. In *The Power of Images*, David Freedberg speaks of the power of the "accurate image" in reference to legends surrounding portraits "unmade by the human hand." He describes "the hunger for *accurate* images of Christ (as if only accuracy could guarantee efficacy)... still sold in photographic, engraved and other forms of reproduction throughout Southern Europe." The existence of these images is proof of the miraculous, conferring credibility. As the direct heir to this phenomenon, the photograph allows us to believe in events, visit sites and enter spaces occupied by people we have never met. More than evidence, the photographic portrait is a document, bearing witness and demanding respect.

First the painted portrait, then the fragile and expensive daguerreotype, endowed the wealthy and privileged with the authority of the accurate image. In contrast, the ferrotype (or tintype) embodies the democratizing potentials of nineteenth-century mechanical reproduction. The tintype was not art, or an aesthetic statement of any kind. Tintypes were cheap. Their enormous popularity left us a plentiful supply of now-anonymous portraits that illuminate the terms and conditions of the world their subjects inhabited. Many of these portraits celebrate the "individuality and the essential dignity of work" described by Michael Carlebach in his book *Working Stiffs*. They exist in the present as a document of the circumstances and politics of the working class. Walter Benjamin's reference to the "aura" and it's "diminution over time" is surely another force to be dealt with in Speckner's work. While the ferrotype was a common product of the industrial revolution, it may have accrued some of Benjamin's famous "aura" in the last hundred years or so. The specific identity of the individual has been lost over time, becoming instead a signifier of a lost culture. Our response to these images may also reflect a conditioned nostalgia, generated by films and romantic literature and filtered through the mechanisms of popular culture. Speckner's approach to her "loaded" materials has to contend with both implications.

Allusions to the transience of these early photographic images as "analogies to human mortality" are inescapable. Roland Barthes, in his book *Camera Lucida*, characterizes the photograph as a "skin." Its magic resides in the fact that light sensitive silver can receive and record the gaze of the subject in front of the camera, which immediately marks it as existing in the

Untitled (brooch), 2004
ferrotype, silver, labradorite, fossil opal snails
approx. 3 1/2 x 3 3/8"

past. The same silver deposits can receive the gaze of a viewer, who resides in the present. This transparent skin, created from emanations of light on silver, is the medium between past and present—it lives in both worlds. But the irony of the photograph is that this skin allows visitation of the past only through vision, perhaps the most distancing of all the senses. The paradox of the photographic image is that to photograph is to keep at distance. However, the gaze of the ferrotype portrait seems burnt indelibly into the metal surface, fixed intensely on the viewer, requiring a response across distances of both time and medium.

This sense of a powerful human presence is, at least in part, a straightforward result of the process of early portrait photography—exposure times required the sitter to remain motionless and expressionless, supported by head and neck clamps for as long as half a minute. Using this process, untrained photographers produced scores of images that "look like history and feel like memory." In *The Culture of the Copy*, Hillel Schwartz reports that people even "sat holding photos of their dead...fine evidence of that faith in successive incarnations through which miniatures work their wonders," and describes the photograph's potential to detach "unique profiles from the masquerades of life and decay of death."

objectivity. She is acutely aware that the tintype's visual and contextual qualities will define the development of the piece, and that she must impose art on both the found image and her own process.

As a consequence, Speckner's process consists of a series of trial constructions and interventions that coalesce into beautifully balanced compositions. The work is distinguished by peculiar conflations of material, form, and image that feel as formally correct as they are unexpectedly illuminating. It's useful to compare her intentions to those of other artists she admires. Unlike Gijs Bakker, who selects and re-situates a singular photographic image to rediscover it, Speckner works from "collections" of representations, materials, and objects to establish fresh affiliations between them. This inevitably results in divergent layers of form and visual information. In her process she connects directly back to the attitudes of her teacher, Hermann Jünger. Her use of multiple stones to activate the flat surfaces of a brooch and her comfort with the gestural possibilities of metal and gems may reflect his influence as well.

Speckner cites interest in the work of a number of painters. Sigmar Polke makes extensive use of photographic material in his paintings. He qualifies its impact by transforming images

She works *against* narrative and content and the potential for sentimentality embodied in the materials and the history of the images themselves.

In selecting the tintype image to anchor her fabrication, Speckner takes on all of this intangible baggage and more. She works *against* narrative and content and the potential for sentimentality embodied in the materials and the history of the images themselves. Each piece is the record of a complex negotiation between the artist and the shifting elements of a visual conversation. Her tools are formalism, abstraction, and a strong sense of visual integrity. She is aware of the documentary authority of the photograph and works with that quality in very specific ways. Her interest in the photography of Diane Arbus may provide initial access to her route toward a finished piece. Arbus's *Family Albums* portraits are, like the Victorian portrait, without expression, intensely focused, and detailed. Arbus took "family photographs and albums from the personal, nearly private realm into one that is public and aesthetic." Her subjects gaze straight at the camera with terrifying clarity and seem to inhabit a space between portrait and anthropological document. Speckner's selections of subjects echo Arbus in their merciless

culled from a collective Western, and often specifically European, culture into re-considered, shifting collections of visual information. He has been "a major force in turning art from its source in a romanticized to a mediated culture as subject." His compatriot Gerhard Richter's painterly responses to the photographic image blur, obscure, and re-emphasize elements of the original, with a detachment that is crucial to his goal "to enlarge the mental space by casting doubt on the power of the representational image." Both artists take the image out of context and place it in a new one, layering modifications of scale, resolution, and texture to mediate or neutralize the influence of the image. Both work from the grand scale and theoretical present of painting. In contrast, Speckner's inquiry is framed and supported by the traditions, dimensions, and conventions of the jeweler. Her methodology, however, reflects a strong, internalized understanding of this range of strategies.

Methodologies aside, to neutralize a photographic image to

Untitled (brooch), 2004
photo in enamel, silver, kauri shells, amethysts
approx. 2 3/4 x 2 3/4"

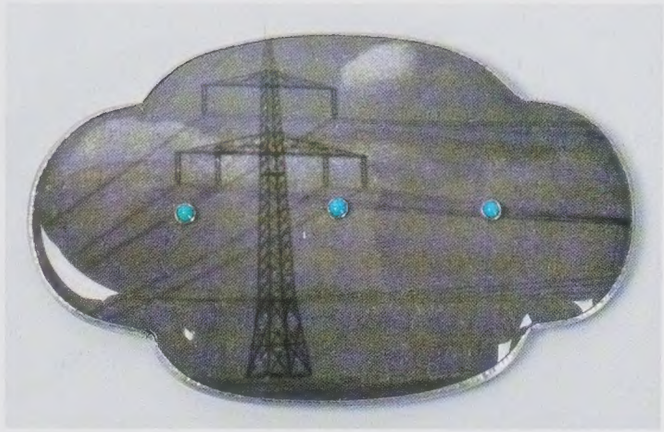
any degree is a formidable challenge, one that Speckner takes on with the tools and materials of a jeweler and the sensibilities of a painter. Each of her pieces exhibits a purposeful awkwardness and directness in its crafting. The "hand of the artist" is highly visible in every piece. Even the physical qualities of prongs and bezels imply a drawn or painted mark, rather than the precision of a highly trained jeweler. Speckner says that "Ferrotypes 'look' at you...looking out from the past," but form, color, and specifics of the image can be negotiated to modulate their content. The gaze of the figure, burning out of the hard iron surface, is blocked by Speckner with a soft, flat silver shape, or a network of silver and stones. The fabricated obstruction transforms the illusory depth of photographic space to the two-dimensional plane of modernism as it cancels telling details of the subject's identity. Speckner uses the powers of her medium to distract us. The precious elements of jewelry-making, silver, stones, pearls, and carvings, focus or obscure visual information and bring these history-laden portraits into a dispassionate present. A person's age, minute details of the time period, the attitude of hands, folds of cloth, glow of skin, can all contribute to or detract from Speckner's objective purpose—suspending the power of the object between formal structure and the content of image and materials. She speaks of "sameness...a cow is a cow...red is red...put them together, the redness might be power," or a new tension might be established.

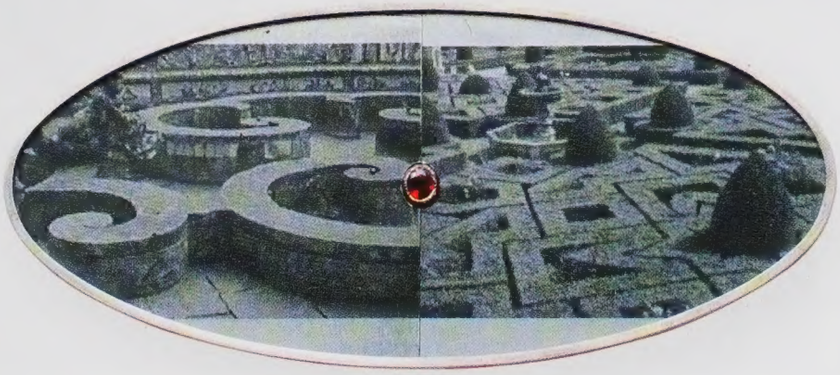
The precious elements of jewelry-making, silver, stones, pearls, and carvings, focus or obscure visual information and bring these history-laden portraits into a dispassionate present.

Looking again at the work of artists that Speckner pays attention to can illuminate various directions in the work. Richter and Polke are obviously influential. She is also drawn to work that at first glance is widely disparate. But the stark and candid landscape photographs of Josef Koudelka do relate, in Speckner's oeuvre, to the structural unity and clarity of Giotto. Both are linked somehow to a second aspect of her production that consists of landscape and still life images. The enamel and etched zinc representations are mostly (but not exclusively) landscape photographs taken by Speckner herself. The still life pieces are often etchings or enamels of flowers and ordinary domestic objects set with, and like, precious stones.

The landscapes are monochromatic and maintain the black-and-white palette of the document. They are deep or shallow

Untitled (brooch), 2004
photo in enamel, silver, white gold 750/000, sapphires
approx. 2 3/4 x 1 5/8"





clockwise from top left
Untitled (earrings), 2002
photo in enamel, silver, turquoise
approx. 1 7/8 x 1 1/2"

Untitled (brooch), 2004
photo in enamel, silver, turquoise
approx. 2 3/4 x 1 5/8"

Untitled (brooch), 2002
photo etching in zinc, silver, ruby, peridot
approx. 3 1/8 x 1 3/8"

expanses, sometimes populated by grazing cows. They seem at first glance to be banal, bucolic country scenes. On closer inspection the very small vistas reveal troubling details...the earth under the cow's hooves looks disturbingly wet and trampled, the trees nearby are stunted and sparse. In another piece, a Victorian oval houses wintry, leafless branches punctuated by a constellation of sparkling faceted stones that could be redemptive, but seem more likely frozen...about to explode with cold.

In another brooch an electrical tower and power lines recede through an arid landscape. They appear in the lushly enameled surface of a lobed shape that implies Baroque architectural forms. The surface of the enamel (or the sky, if looked at another way) is an atmospheric gray punctuated by three equally spaced turquoise cabochons. The radiant blue stones cause the surface to oscillate between jewel, abstraction, and document. The somewhat brutal reality of these images is forever in subtle tension with the expectations raised by the familiar shapes and materials of the wearable object. They are rendered remote, at a safe distance, by their scale. Yet that comfort is neutralized by the unsettling intimacy of their relationship to the body as jewelry.

"Beauty" has a place in Speckner's work, not as Kant's "universal, valid for every man," but as an element to be suppressed or mediated, to keep the subject of the work open and in play. In Speckner's work the idea of art as a vehicle for what Marjorie Welish calls the "Aah! effect," an instant recognition of aesthetic quality informed by shared ideals of beauty, is collateral to Duchamp's contention that visual art is "something with which to think." In the latter aesthetic construct the value of beauty is no longer assumed but suspect. Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe states "the possibility of beauty's suppression...has become even more acute now that the media associated with art are no longer the ones through which beauty conceives of itself." These cultural terms contrast with those of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, sources for many of Speckner's images and ornamental motifs. The nineteenth century "imagined beauty in terms of sculpture and painting: flesh that had the translucency of marble; cosmetics that enhanced by means of a layering that covered the surface." Gilbert-Rolfe argues that our culture "employs, instead, the language of photography." If that is so, the power of the image in Speckner's work is intensified beyond our acceptance of the accuracy of the photograph. In her practice the photograph's capacity to convince could easily join with her materials and forms to

Untitled (brooch), 2005
photo etching on zinc,
silver, split diamonds

Untitled (necklace), 2004
photo in enamel, silver,
grey pearls, turmaline

emphasize historical allusions to beauty. As adornment, the work is additionally encumbered with meaning and assumptions related to both physical enhancement and social status. The risks and opportunities for the maker to surrender to these influences increase exponentially. Instead, Speckner defends the work against them.

Some of the portrait brooches and the jewelry organized around still life suggest a simpler, more subtle relationship of image, form, and material that seems suited to the covenants of the genre. This is an inquiry in which Speckner sometimes indulges her own sympathy with the vocabularies of sentiment and beauty. A single flower, while lovely, droops a little sadly in its frame—small transparent shapes fall though the shallow space in front of the blossom. The clarity and soft profile of the tiny stones suggest water but reveal hard stone edges here and there. They might communicate brittle fragility or a sweet Victorian desolation that is already implied by the ghostly quality of the etching and oval format of the brooch. However, in the context of Speckner's practice they could as easily be tenderly placed compositional elements with no meaning beyond their visual appropriateness to the scale and ephemeral quality of the object.

In some pieces the material becomes image and vice versa. Several recent brooches incorporate coral. In one, a real chunk of coral is a structural unit in the brooch; in another an image of coral floats in darkness within a heart-shaped frame. The strangeness of its natural form in the familiar, sentimental outline of the valentine heart suggests organs and bone. The baroque pearl that drops from the point of the heart could speak of the sea or to the conventions of Renaissance jewels.

A necklace composed of three circular, representational enamels interspersed with flat, gradated slices of natural tourmaline yields a curious illusion that unexpectedly engages the body as site. The flatness of the tourmaline gives way to the potential of reality offered by the photographic illusion. One enameled disc is printed with a pattern of leaves that exists in a shallow visual space, near the "surface" of the picture plane. Another pictures an open fan that is as much a flat shape on the plane as it is an image of a rather elaborate and decorative accessory. The third is a perspectival view of a simple white bowl on a flat surface that angles away from the viewer. The differences in the three images seem arbitrary. They are harmonious in their scale, familiarity, and neutrality. However, when the piece is placed on the neck the reality of the photographic "place" that contains the bowl is startlingly assertive. It creates an unexpectedly deep space on the neck of

Untitled (brooch), 2004
photo etching in zinc, silver, orange pearl
approx. 2 1/8 x 2 1/2"

the wearer that is astonishing and disorienting. Space is in play again in an oval image of rippled water. Four pearls are both poised on the flat surface of the brooch, and at the same time perfectly cupped by the illusory interval of a breaking wave.

Speckner meets each piece, and the parts that it will be comprised of, with willfully renewed detachment. In order to respond intuitively and rationally to the specifics of appearance and substance she disciplines herself to adopt the attitude she describes as "virginal." Her studio is full of materials, stones, natural and found objects, and jewelry in various stages of development. Photographs that will find their way onto the pieces are everywhere, as are working photographs of multiple organizations of parts. Speckner configures and re-configures the elements that currently interest her, documenting each iteration for a reference snapshot as she works through the many options. All decisions are open and fluid until she begins to fabricate, and changes are possible until the last parts are firmly fixed.

Another aspect of the work is revealed in the many pieces that are near completion. The back of a Speckner brooch is the site of a loving indulgence in the decorative prerogatives of the jeweler. Ornamental and functional potentials that are kept under careful control in the visual negotiations of this body of work are given free rein on the "other" side, seen and known only to the maker and the wearer. Elaborate, lacy patterns of pierced silver set with precious stones support well-made, practical brooch findings. Some comment on the primary aspect of the piece; links formed in the figure eight of infinity back a black and white image of a tree trunk tied with a pearl suspended on a delicate gold wire; a fine, deeply carved cameo nestles behind a flat, split image of the top of an ordinary spiky houseplant and pot.

New genres, structures, layers, textures, tensions, and relationships indicate the restless curiosity and commitment to making that defines every Speckner piece, but the photograph remains a constant. Several of her solo exhibitions over the last 10 years has been accompanied by thoughtfully constructed catalogs. Photographs of the work extend our understanding of it as a way of thinking about the visual world. A piece printed in the mid-1990s places the jewelry in mundane domestic environments, where the Richter-like, moving blur of the camera's record is at odds with the static setting.

Speckner's enigmatic objects appear in these almost familiar situations where they glow with a mysterious glamour.

Speckner's enigmatic objects appear in these almost familiar situations where they glow with a mysterious glamour. The contextual tactic invites a range of speculations beyond representation. A 1999 publication exploits the potentials of yet another level of structure. In this catalog Speckner organized her objects sparely...only one or two small pieces on large vertically elongated pages. The subtleties of the work might have been dwarfed and lost. Instead each piece holds its place with conspicuous conviction, located in a perfectly calculated spatial relationship that echoes the strategies of its own making.

Speckner, an enthusiastic traveler and photographer, keeps visual journals of sites that are important to her. She is currently at work on a book that will pair photographic representations of place with objects and adornment. The book is another manifestation of a vision that admits all possibilities, but remains remarkably consistent as it shifts and evolves. Bettina Speckner might describe this notable and prolific evolution as "normal." When asked what normal means to her, Speckner laughs, "Why...normal is me...I'm normal!" ◘

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Charles Loloma

Hopi Modernist

by Ellen Berkovitch

Master jeweler Charles Loloma was a Hopi spiritual leader—a member of the Badger Clan and a Hopi snake priest. His powers of charm extended through his ritual life and into his compelling jewelry. In daily life, Loloma never talked about Hopi religion. But his jewelry limns the Hopi landscape and expresses a world of spirit. Shaped by gems and woods cut into miniature topographies, the jewelry contours geology and time. It proposes intervals in which what is just now visible might shift with a slant of light or a flick of the wrist into the ineffable. Lustrous, flat surfaces abut plugs of jagged stone. Iconography rooted in Hopi imagery intersects with motifs from ancient Egypt. Color and decoration revel on the body like brilliant plumage.

Loloma was a man of some contradictions. Although he spent his life in Hotevilla, the Hopi village of his birth, his work was turned down three times by the Gallup Inter-Tribal Ceremonial for not being Indian enough. He built his rock house with his hands, while he drove Jaguars and flew in airplanes that he owned. He took a Dale Carnegie course on influencing people. He traveled to Paris, Egypt, Colombia, and, during the last decade of his studio work, used Mikimoto pearls and diamonds, along with exotic woods he had encountered on trips through Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

To come to Loloma's jewelry with no prior knowledge, one might identify strains of art nouveau in the constructions as precise and intricate as stained glass. People close to him cite architectural influences: skyscrapers in Manhattan or aerial views of Paolo Soleri's Arco Santi near Flagstaff, Arizona. Yet the exaggerated, masked geometries of Hopi katsinas (kachinas), interpreted as abstractions, are paramount in Loloma's work. The dazzling height bracelets, studded by multiple gems, jut as high as an inch and a half and span up to four inches in diameter. Surface contrasts between jagged and smooth, shiny and matte, elevated and flat make the jewelry at once earthbound and heavenly, Stone Age and Space Age. Throughout, Loloma deeply engaged with the cross-cultural practice of patterning the sacred through materials.

Ring, ca. 1985
18k gold, lapis lazuli
height 1 3/4"

The Wheelwright Museum in Santa Fe assembled, under guest curator Martha Hopkins Struever, a 466-object Loloma retrospective, "Loloma: Beauty Is His Name." Exhibit designer Lou Gauci ringed the kiva-shaped walls of the museum's central gallery with cases showing thematic groupings of Loloma's work. The exhibit eschewed labels or a chronology of dates. While that made for an exquisite visual experience, it also partly obscured the evolution of the jeweler's work. The exhibit focused primarily on pieces made between 1972 and 1986.

An interior corridor built inside the circle showcased Loloma's fluent movement around materials—from his early marriages of turquoise and coral with ironwood, through the "spectacular" minglings of lapis, sugilite, ivories, and woods as rare as coco bolo, tiger, and ebony. Loloma periodically cast gem-set holloware. He made wrist guards, bolos, rings,

Pendants, ca. 1970
silver, turquoise, wood, coral, fossilized ivory, lapis lazuli, matrix from turquoise, malachite
length 4 1/2"

bracelets, earrings, pendants, and necklaces. Some of these employ strings of prehistoric turquoise beads—for example, Navajo joclas, the Navajo word for earrings, dating to about 1100 A.D. But Loloma would jettison their classification by setting them into a bracelet's high arch. His whimsical and witty puns on tradition and innovation managed to restage both into an equipoise of the unexpected.

According to Wheelwright curator Cheri Falkenstien-Doyle, numerous jewelers consider Loloma the most influential Native American jeweler of the twentieth century. "He was able to pull information from so many different sources and use it," she says. "We were totally overdue for a major retrospective."

Loloma's first major jewelry venue was the New Craft Center, run and organized by Lloyd Kiva New in Scottsdale. This nascent 1950s artist colony galvanized energies between Native American arts leaders such as New and mainstream museum curators such as René d'Harnoncourt of the Museum of Modern Art, arguably the first U.S. curator to exhibit Native American art as fine art. The Heard Museum in Phoenix, which gave Loloma a sales show in 1971, now is collecting documents and objects representing the mutually seeding strains of this time in culture. "Loloma: Beauty is His Name" marks a prescient case in point that Native American art did not resist drawing into itself dominant cultural strands, or drawing itself out into active participation with them.

Charles Loloma was an artistic prodigy. Born in 1921 in Hotevilla, in 1937 he entered the new Hopi High School, where noted artist Fred Kabotie ran the art program. The next year, he transferred to Phoenix Indian School and met Kiva New, who had just graduated from the Art Institute of Chicago and would become a lifelong friend. New Craft Center in Scottsdale assembled many burgeoning Indian talents under one roof. They made up a landmark assembly, said Mark Bahti, principal of Bahti Indian Arts in Tucson. Bahti's father, Tom, was one of Loloma's closest friends and began exhibiting his first jewelry around 1955.

clockwise from top left
Bracelets, ca. 1960 and 1956 (below)
tufa-cast silver
diameter 2 3/4"

Pendants, 1970
Tufa-cast, carved, and fabricated silver, turquoise
length 4"

Bracelet, ca. 1962
silver, ironwood, turquoise, coral
width 3 1/2"

Bracelet and Earrings, ca. 1970
silver, turquoise, lapis lazuli, wood, and coral

"This has to be understood as a real movement into the future. It was coming from Indian artists, from within the group. And it really was spectacular."

"In the 1950s, a handful but growing number of Indian artists were butting up against expectations placed on what they were supposed to be producing," Bahti says, among them Oscar Howe, Loloma, Kenneth Begay, Roger Tsabetsaye, and Helen Hardin. "This has to be understood as a real movement into the future. It was coming from Indian artists, from within the group. And it really was spectacular," Bahti adds.

The Wheelwright exhibition presented as its earliest example of Loloma work a wall mural upon which he collaborated, at age 19, with two fellow Hopis under Kabotie's direction. The mural was shown in the 1941 Museum of Modern Art exhibit, "Indian Arts of the United States," which was organized by René d'Harnoncourt. D'Harnoncourt would go on to introduce Loloma to European painters, fashion designers, and to promote him in landmark shows in San Francisco, New York, and Europe.

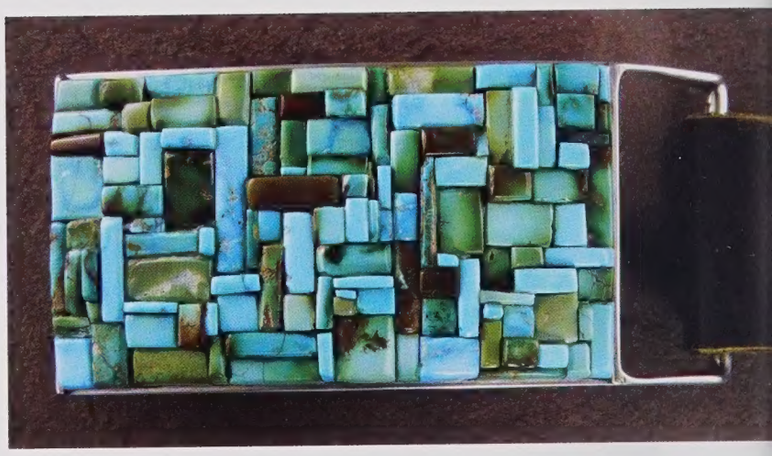
Loloma served in the U.S. Army in World War II, supervising road building in the Aleutian Islands. Upon his return, Loloma and his wife, Otellie (from whom he later separated and eventually divorced), went to Alfred University in New York under the GI Bill to study ceramics at the School for American Craftsmen. This, according to Bahti, was where Loloma first began to flex his distinctive style.

"He was doing ceramics in the early '50s and '60s that were Hopi interpretations of Egyptian figures, with Hopi hairstyles, executed with remarkable grace. But one of the problems that plagued Charles through the late 60s, and used to make my dad crazy, was the phrase, 'It's nice but it's not Indian.' Charles would hear it all the time."

The Gallup Inter-Tribal Ceremonial, which ran an annual wholesale fair in August to accommodate trader stores, reflected this attitude in spades, said Bahti. Run by a cast of all-white hotel and restaurant owners and car dealers catering to trader stores, "it was trying to fulfill that fantasy of what being Indian meant." Loloma's work was rejected from Gallup three times in the 1950s.

A decade later, however, Loloma had the opposite problem—taking first prize too often at the Scottsdale National. What made his work so important? "He had an entirely different approach to his materials than any other jeweler had ever had—and he used turquoise a lot of people wouldn't even consider for a heartbeat. [Navajo painter] Robert Sorrell first pointed

Buckle, ca. 1975
silver, turquoise
width 3 3/4"



out to me that it was a painter's approach to stones and inlay," Bahti says.

While scores of contemporary jewelers cite Loloma as their influence, he claimed only two apprentices, the Moroccan-raised Eveli Sabatie, and his niece, Verma Nequatewa. Sabatie worked and lived with Loloma on Hopi from 1968 to 1972, a period when their collaboration coalesced in a huge flowering in Loloma's experiment.

Sabatie recalls meeting Loloma for the first time: "One night (in San Francisco) someone took me to the Fillmore and some people were gathered talking about a young Navajo resisting the draft. I decided to go to the trial at Federal Building. The elevator came, and when the door opened, it was filled with representatives of all the southwestern tribes. Everybody was all dressed up. My mouth just dropped. I was the only non-Indian there. I spent a whole day with two Hopis I met at the trial, and they invited me to come to Hopi for the Bean Dance."

Consider Loloma's multivalent objects as semaphores, colliding historic similarities between Egyptian patterning and Katsina inlay, yet always reiterating his foundation in Hopi-based symbolism.

"Loloma sat down beside me at the Laundromat and immediately he started asking me all these questions, where I came from and what I had done and what I was doing here. He asked me to come to his shop and see his work. And he said, would you like to learn to make jewelry? And I said of course. The whole operation at the time was just a little shop, with a single backroom."

A case of Sabatie's work at the Wheelwright, the innovations of which proved highly influential to Loloma, included the dazzling *The Significance*, a handmade book of silver inset with stones, ivory, and bone that relays a visual picture of Sabatie's own incredible sense of pattern and design. Sabatie explains that after meeting Loloma, she realized that she needed to hone some basics. "Tribal learning is done in silence, through watching," she says. She returned to California to learn to solder and handle a torch before going back to Hopi. In California she purchased silver and gathered cow bones she began curing for use in jewelry. "One of the first things I made was a little box with a piece of cow bone. Later, when I saw boxes Charles had made, they are very much like some of those early boxes."

What emerged aesthetically for Loloma during his time with Sabatie was a recognition of the confluence of stylizations that united mosaic traditions. Mark Bahti explains that Loloma's inlay began with pairings of turquoise and ironwood—a local wood, harder than mesquite, which grows as a tree in the Sonoran and Chihuahuan deserts. Tom Bahti had introduced Loloma to ironwood boxes that jeweler Frank Patania, Jr., was making. Later, Bahti would show him ironwood sculptures made by Xeri Indians in Mexico.

At roughly the same time, Sabatie remembers, Loloma received a book about Egyptian jewelry that proved wildly important to him. "His inlay reference was the old Hopi earrings that katsinas wear," recalls Sabatie. These earrings inlaid mosaic of turquoise with tiny pieces of abalone in the center, on square pieces of cottonwood, and date to Mesa Verde (1100 A.D.).

"The only inlay experience I had had was with mosaic in turquoise blues, because that's the color of Islam," Sabatie said. "But the Egyptians used the stones in slits or in squares next to each other. I believe that's how he started using lapis. Because he really looked at the Egyptians and there was no lapis around (on Hopi) at the time. It was so hard to find lapis lazuli. We were able to get good coral, and some ivory and ironwood at that time, but that was about it."

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Tufa-casting, which was not a traditional Hopi jewelry-making method but had been used by Navajos since 1898, was Loloma's first casting experience and he used it, along with fabrication and lost-wax casting, which he learned in 1957, throughout his career.

A 1974 gold Hopi maiden, exhibited alongside half the tufa

Necklace, ca. 1975
14k gold, turquoise
length 7 1/2"

mold in which her body was cast, wears a necklace of tiny turquoise beads. Her Lander blue turquoise head, with slit eyes and mouth, confirms that Egyptian jewelry techniques unveiled a seminal discovery for Loloma. The figure also marks an early notice of his abstracting, in inlay, the geometrically stylized features of Hopi Katsina faces. Consider Loloma's multivalent objects as semaphores, colliding historic similarities between Egyptian patterning and Katsina inlay, yet always reiterating his foundation in Hopi-based symbolism.

In 1957, Loloma went to California to learn lost-wax casting from Bob Winston—a modernist jeweler who, along with Philip Morton, Alexander Calder, and Jacques Lipschitz, had shown in key 1940s jewelry exhibitions at Walker Art Center in Minneapolis and at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Loloma's niece Verma Nequatewa joined the studio in 1969 and began to learn under his direction how to set stones, becoming his stone-setter. Nequatewa worked with Loloma until the studio closed in 1988. Now, in a studio across the street from his in Hotevilla, she signs her jewelry "Sonwai."

Nequatewa cited a silver ram's head bolo and tufa-cast bolo slide representing the katsina Chakwaina among the earliest examples of Loloma's work shown at the Wheelwright.

Rings, ca. 1980
left: 18k gold, sugilite, coral, turquoise, charoite
height 1 1/2"
center: 14k gold, lapis lazuli, charoite, turquoise
right: 18k gold, sugilite, coral, lapis lazuli, turquoise

Bracelet, ca. 1975
14k gold, lapis lazuli, wood, fossilized ivory, coral, malachite
diameter 4"

Tufa-cast silver bracelets dating to around 1960 have blackened trough spaces that suggest cuts a curandera might leave on the ground. A 1956 bracelet Loloma made for Ogilvanna Wright, the wife of Frank Lloyd Wright, bears scorched ridged lines nesting flat squares of coral and turquoise and, near the wrist, a second coral chip that covers a hole generated in the casting.

Loloma made his first documented ironwood-incorporating bracelet in 1962. He considered it so important in his development that he held it back from the buyer for 18 months and took it with him on his first trip to Paris, in 1963.

"The earliest silver work was very, very rough," Nequatewa says. Its vocabulary of stylizations juxtaposed the rusticity of casting burns and the ridged lines of plowed fields or topographic maps. These templates continued to guide the jewelry, even as it morphed into mind-blowing arrangements of dazzling gemstones. Nequatewa says her stone-setting was initially a cornrow style of lining up multicolored stones flush and straight. Over time, she began stacking stones into elevations in order to pattern increasingly abstract designs. "The stones would decide the shape of curve of the bracelet," she explains.

In the catalog that accompanies the exhibition, one can trace the development from roughly 1975 to 1980 of objects that made use of sugilite, lapis, ivory, and more expensive and rare turquoise and coral. Spectacular stacking is visible in two ca. 1975 bracelets, which Nequatewa notes had been partly inspired by a trip Loloma made to New York City. Nineteen cantilevered stone slices set into a 1975 fabricated gold bracelet attained a four-inch diameter and repeated color and gradation for a bundled effect. One imagines the multiplicity of ways it would have been experienced: by the wearer, from below; while a viewer reading it from above might have perceived a Mondrian-like composition.

The post-1970 use of higher-end materials was, for Loloma, "a paradigm shift, in response to the market," says Mark Bahti. "But he did continually refresh his work. For our twenty-fifth anniversary show in '76, Charles made stone sculpture and ink drawings. He went back to ceramics for the first time in decades. He would from time to time go off to another media, and then, when he came back to making jewelry, he would do something completely different."

Regardless of media or style, Loloma's badger clan symbol, along with corn maiden, serpents, lizards, and Chakwaina representations would recur throughout his 30-year career. Collaged turquoise necklaces incorporating Lander blue and Bisbee appear intensely painterly. Loloma sometimes extended joclas into insanely long, 10-inch earrings or whimsically nested a branch of coral into a bolo slide. Fashion designs became increasingly important to him after his two trips to Paris in 1963 and 1971. And the biomorphic shapes of the coral, wood, turquoise, ivory and lapis lazuli suggest the undulant figures

Bracelets, ca. 1975
left: 14k gold, wood, fossilized ivory, coral, lapis lazuli, turquoise, jade
right: 14k gold, lapis lazuli, turquoise, coral, wood
diameter 3 1/2"

...Loloma was mainly interested in jewelry as a spatial practice that needed to embrace the formal rules of painting.

and strange movements in the paintings of Max Ernst, whom Loloma had met in Paris. As Nequatewa stressed, Loloma was mainly interested in jewelry as a spatial practice that needed to embrace the formal rules of painting.

■ ■ ■ ■

President Lyndon Johnson in the 1960s made a state gift of Loloma's jewelry to Imelda Marcos of the Philippines. Movie stars periodically drove up to his shop on Hopi. Taking a Dale Carnegie course, according to Bahti, helped Loloma learn how to market his work. "Two times I've been to Europe and Paris and have experienced what fine things are," Loloma said. He stayed at the Waldorf Astoria and had eaten at "21." "To work toward 'fine' things I need to know certain of these feelings."

Yet the frustrations of typecasting and labeling remained. Putting his Indianness out there, comments Sabatie, was a mixed bag for him personally. "I think he wanted to go to Paris because he had to make a stand as a person in front of the white culture."

"It was a real tricky thing to do because when you start playing those games you can get caught in them. In his work he remained pure, but in his person, I think, he suffered from it." She said that Loloma's difficulties in being perceived as "Indian enough" were that much more frustrating to him because he realized the debt so many Native American jewelry styles owed to Spanish influences—for example, the squash blossom necklace.

Says Nequatewa, "For sure on Hopi reservations everybody still talks about him. Whoever knew him in the kiva learned a lot from him and wished they had spent more time with him."

■ ■ ■ ■

Loloma suffered a bad car wreck in 1986. Although he had a brief recovery after a rehabilitation stay at Barrows Neurological Institute in Phoenix, he declined again and died in a nursing home in Phoenix in 1991, at age 69. Loloma's legacy is work that remains as stunning in its range, in its deliberate assertions of influences, and in its refusal to be constrained into any one world order, as when it was first made.

"I wish to create a relationship between the earth and myself," Loloma says, walking his dry cornfields with his nephew, Bryson, in a 1974 video. "Sometimes we do not realize what we are kicking over." He selects a piece of rock from the red ground. "I want to make the soul come out." ◘

Ellen Berkovitch is a writer based in Santa Fe.

REVIEWS

"BIJOUX CONTEMPORAINS DE FRANCE"

GALERIE NOEL GUYOMARC'H BIJOUX D'ART, MONTRÉAL
JUNE 2-JULY 2, 2005

by SHELLEY POMERANCE

What makes French design so...French?

Sophie Hanagarth's *Bijoux de famille* (Family Jewels), drapes around the neck, a long metal strand culminating in two testicle shapes that hang strategically over the appropriate area of the body. On closer examination this rope reveals itself to be a collection of old bottle caps, narrow at the neck, and gradually increasing in circumference then tapering to form the testicle shapes. A necklace at once elegant and absurd, even slightly reptilian, it gently mocks certain masculine pursuits—a paean to medieval armor, and to beer drinking. Women, no need for envy here, you can have your very own male gonads!

Être (To Be), Virginie Bois's necklace made from old family sheets cut into small squares of varying sizes, folded and strung together, makes a soft, white rope, evoking memories of a thousand nights—the dreams, embraces, twists, and turns—a new variation on a string of pearls. Put the thickest section behind your neck, like an Elizabethan ruff, and it's a place to rest your head. Turn it so that the thickness rests on your belly, and it recreates the weight and sensation of pregnancy.

In the exhibition "Bijoux contemporains de France," economy of means, subtlety, and spareness rule. Also an unerring eye for form, old ideas made new, and a dry sense of humor. These 20 artists, all currently working in France, play with the notions of necklace, ring, and brooch, taking them to their extreme. When is a necklace more than a necklace? How many twists can one give to a ring and still have a ring? How to pin a brooch to a dress—sans pins?

Monika Brugger's luminous silver discs (*Fragile*) appear ethereal and otherworldly, eaten away by time, the elements, or insects. In reality, Brugger applies acid and pierces hundreds of tiny holes to create this lace-like effect in silver. Her brooches are held in place not by a pin, but by a rubber ring placed inside a dress or shirt and pressed into the center of the silver disk.

Ulrike Kämpfert takes another approach to the pin-free brooch. *Ombrelle* (Parasol) draws the fabric of one's clothing through a circle of delicate metal spikes, et voilà! it holds in place, simultaneously jewel and fastener. In *Cheminez*, Brune Boyer Pellerej's homage to the chimneys of Paris (and a play on words referring to process and progress), the brooch resembles a chimney top in miniature, but the fastener is much larger, a gilded disk worn inside one's clothing, yet visible through the fabric. Again, reflecting that what you don't see may be more important than what you do see, Catherine Abrial uses hidden mirrors (but no smoke) to reveal secrets engraved on the inner surface of her rings. And Astrid Meyer and Brune Boyer Pellerej experiment with a small object that sits on top of the hand, attached to a smooth shape or stone held in the palm, perceived only by the wearer, reminiscent of the little rocks collected on walks and the sensation of holding them.

These artists are very intent on exploring the ring: that age-old symbol of a bond, a pact, and possession. Over and over they re-invent it, giving it new twists. Florence Croisier's silver rings (*Continue*) are a double twist—taking two turns around the finger, veering into an unexpected angle, or squared off on one side, at once circle and square. Laurence Opperman's vision *Carrément rond* (Squarely round) is a round ring that metamorphoses into a square, all in one solid piece. *Se plier* (Pleats) by Sonia Ledos is a study in flexibility and conformity. Four rings, one for each finger, chained together—a collection of miniature constraints. A tiny cloth accordion joins two rings, allowing the fingers limited freedom. Another ring offers a customized fit: the first time you put it on, a thin sheet of silver or gold is bent out of shape by your finger and stays that way, a metaphor for commitment and compromise. Benjamin Lignel's *Wedding Band* is a contemporary symbol of marriage, freed of notions of constraint and possession. A simple gold circle, it rests atop the finger, representing completion, harmony, and union, held in place by a second gold ring that slides on the finger. His *Twists* are platinum rings that drape the finger in sensual folds, more fluid than solid.

Many of the artists in the show are teachers at or graduates of AFEDAP (l'Association pour la Formation et le Développement des Arts Plastiques) in Paris. Descending from an imposing European tradition, it's surprising how insouciant, playful, and alive on the body this jewelry is. Compared to North American work, it's less likely to expose the labor-intensive nature of production, and appears to be executed with ease and simplicity, perhaps even sleight of hand. It's only with a longer look that you realize what great calculation, precision, and sophistication are at play here.

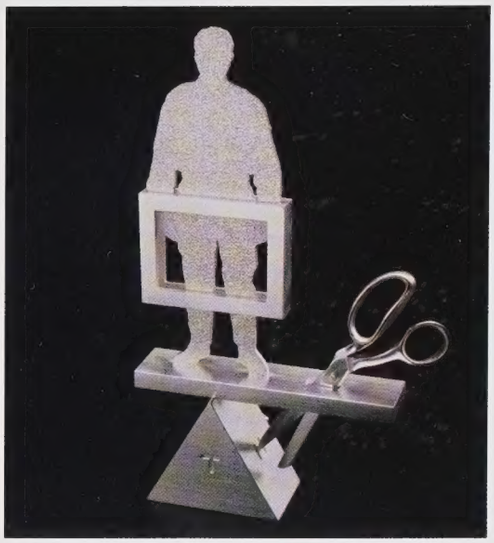
Shelley Pomerance is an arts writer living in Montréal.

clockwise from top left
Sophie Hanagarth
Bijoux de famille, 2002
bottle caps
30 x 1 1/8"
Photo: Michel Azous

Sonia Ledos
Se plier, 2003
silver and silk
3/4 x 1"
Photo: Brune Boyer

Ulrike Kämpfert
Ombrelle (Parasol), 2004
iron, gold
2 3/4 x 2 1/2"
Photo: Babette Boucher

Virginie Bois
Être, 2004
family bed sheets
length 27 1/2"
Photo: Théo Mercier



"SIGNS OF LIFE"
FACÈRÉ JEWELRY ART GALLERY, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON
MAY 17-JUNE 4, 2005

by JUDY WAGONFELD

In our multi-tasking world it's odd how rarely two or more fields of art coalesce. But when they do, the hybrids spawned can make us brake. In one such venture, "Signs of Life" at Seattle's Facèré Jewelry Art Gallery, contemporary art jewelry served as the call and literature as the response.

As potent conceptually based art, the exhibition's works surpass the notion of jewelry as purely decorative or symbolic of wealth. Far from glitz, these chic pieces blend raw elements and humble cast-offs in dynamic necklaces and brooches steeped in today's concerns.

But instead of fleshing out artistic intent through description, background information, and artist statements, this catalog depends on writers' stories and poems to forge connections with viewers. Contemplating the writing while perusing the jewelry feels voyeuristic, as if reading a jeweler's diary.

While catalogs generally strive to educate the mind, this experiment's juxtaposition of image and verse aims for the heart. Triggering imagination, memory, and insight, it draws on perceptions of culture, nature, and interpersonal relationships. Igniting smoldering subconscious realms, these authors fan the emotive powers emanating from the exquisitely crafted and visceral works.

"That magnetism, that pull between us disappeared," writes Karen Lorene in "Luke's Gone," her reaction to Christina Y. Smith's silver brooch, *Reconveyance*. Like a splash of cold water it converts the sterling's austere architecture and frosty surface into a lament for abruptly lost love. Teetering on a plank that's pierced by scissors and perched seesaw fashion atop a pyramid base, the silhouetted male figure preens like a poster-boy of ambivalence steeped in the throes of severing emotional ties.

Poet Gwen Head, in "Boyfriend, Ready to Wear," hooks onto the humor of Ron Ho's necklace, *Dunhaung: Return to the Silk Road*. Suspended from sumptuous strands of semi-transparent, faceted, and milky-white beads, Ho's sly, silver relief camel tilts his nose up haughtily. Head perceives him as "sexy, stuck-up with bedroom eyes—your kind of guy!"

"Never and Again," a poem by Mary St. Martin, reads between the lines of Ramona Solberg's exotic necklace, *Sake-Sake*. As if a premonition, it conveys the poignancy of Solberg's death during the show. The vitality of a silver edged sake label merged with Solberg's classic, ethnographic found objects—an Asian ceramic face, coin and silver dragonfly—to celebrate Solberg's raison d'être, a passion for the enigmas of travel.

Tank Route by Taweesak Molsawat conveys war's ambiguities and consequences in everyday street sign brooches. A red tank cuts across one of his Champlevé diamond shapes, mimicking roadside warnings of deer and cow crossings. Cynically, a rectangular sign states, "Tank Route—M-F 8 a.m.-8 a.m. and Sat-Sun 8 a.m.-8 a.m." In another segment a red arrow points bi-directionally, unsure of a course. A compelling commentary, the piece has it all; humor, fine construction, and politics without preaching—a first-rate melding of art and politics.

Jana Brevick's pendant, *SnackBot*, a playful robot waiter on roller skates, stands ready to serve. The cleverly engineered and articulated body incorporates an electric socket head, fabricated silver trunk with keypad buttons, a vintage safe dial securing a secret compartment in its chest, bicycle brake legs, and plastic wrapped arms clutching a dish and tongs. Comical rather than threatening, it evokes the futuristic sex machine farce of Woody Allen's *Sleeper*. Greg Bear's "Silicon Times e-Book Review" plays on the travails of well-meaning robots hampered by human stupidity.

Cynthia Toops's pendant, *The Wanderer*, is an Inuit man garbed in furry felt and inspired Pricilla Long's poem, "Journey." Her words, "I will dream, as if in pen and ink, the creased map your face," steep us in the gloom of bidding a loved one goodbye. The figure's lined, black polymer clay face burgeons with the wisdom of age. The compass skull hidden beneath his cap whispers the surety of return, a certainty ensuing from tribal awareness of the land.

Like a book club, "Signs of Life" honors literature's impact on our quest for meaning. Its writers, like superb orators, offer nuggets that jolt us from a frenzied world. We halt, anxious to ponder the art that elicited their responses. As a metaphor for communication, the show's pairings unify rather than divide. Quietly, they serve as a talisman of hope for our volatile times.

Judy Wagonfeld is a freelance writer based in Seattle.

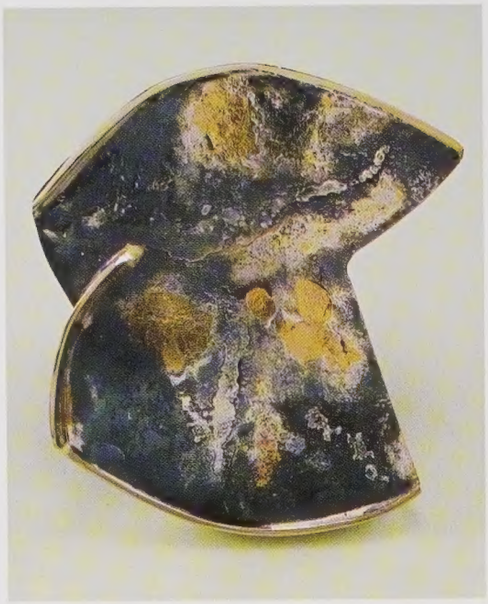
clockwise from top left
Taweesak Molsawat
Tank Route (brooch), 2005
sterling silver, brass, enamel
5 3/4 x 1 7/8"

Cynthia Toops
The Wanderer (necklace) 2005
polymer clay, felt, bone, leather, compass, mirror, sterling silver
height 4 1/2"

Christina Y. Smith
Reconveyance (brooch), 2005
sterling silver
3 x 4 x 1"

Ramona Solberg
Sake-Sake (necklace), 2005
silver sake label, ceramic mask, Japanese coin, silver dragonfly
4 x 2 1/4 x 1/2"

REVIEWS



"AGGIE BEYNON, WABI: IMPERFECT BEAUTY"

ROBERT LANGEN GALLERY,
WATERLOO, ONTARIO
MARCH 30-APRIL 30, 2005

by BARBARA ISHERWOOD

This exhibition presented a twenty-year retrospective of work by Waterloo-based metalsmith Aggie Beynon. In the early 1980s, Beynon, then a student in Fine Arts at the University of Kansas, began working with powdered metals. Powdered metal is used in industry to form components such as automobile parts; in that context, however, the metal is of one uniform type. Inspired by the palette and pattern of mokume gane, Beynon pressed layers of powdered silver and copper into a small die, heated it, then rolled the fused metal into sheet. Working in conjunction with Ken Rose, head of the Mechanical Engineering Department of the University of Kansas, she eventually developed the process that has been both her signature and inspiration for more than two decades.

The show at Robert Langen Gallery makes it clear that the journey is as important to Beynon as the destination—included in the exhibition were examples of the technical research that continues to intrigue her. The challenges of working with powdered metals have been many. Incorporating powdered gold into her mixes took years of trials, due to the temperament of the metal. Lately she has been experimenting with powdered titanium and niobum, adding a whole spectrum of colors to her repertoire. The samples are little treasures in themselves, illustrating that Beynon's greatest strength is her willingness to keep pushing her material until that magic alchemical marriage of art and science occurs. Her affinity for the Japanese term "wabi-sabi," defined in the accompanying exhibition catalogue as "a beauty of things imperfect, impermanent and incomplete," reflects the artist's respect for the role that chance, by way of unpredictable chemical reaction, occupies in her work.

The holloware and jewelry on view dates from 1982 to 2004. Of the early pieces, a perfume bottle from 1982 stands out. Two asymmetrical arches are juxtaposed to form container and lid. Powdered copper and silver, laid down in rough striations that recall sedimentary rock, form the container's narrow side and top half of the lid. The jagged stripes complement the curving form, animate the surface and visually unite the two components. The bold shape contrasts effectively with the relatively compact size. Perfume bottles are one of Beynon's favored forms, allowing her to exercise her penchant for offbeat shapes characterized by asymmetrical curves.

The jewelry in the exhibition takes a wide range of forms, and includes some pieces made with conventional techniques. However it is the powdered metal work of the last 10 years that really arrests the eye, particularly the brooches, where the powdered metal is showcased in unencumbered fashion, except for the occasional well-chosen stone. *Fay's Pin*, from 2000, features powdered pure silver, copper, and gold set in an 18k gold and silver frame, with a topaz at one corner echoing the subtle tones of the furnace-patinated metal. Here the patterned effects of Beynon's earlier works have given way to a freer approach that results in an organic surface that looks mined, rather than made. Like many of the pieces in the show, this one is named after its owner—because Beynon's work is so labor intensive, most of it is done on commission.

The variety of colors and textures Beynon is able to conjure up through different combinations of powdered pure silver, gold, copper, and assorted surface treatments is testament to her deep understanding of her chosen technique. In *Quiet #1*, from 1997, a subtle copper patch floats upon a field patinated a deep brown, with a number of small inset pieces of gold providing contrast. The minimal setting of four claws, one a long squiggle, is the perfect understated frame for this visual haiku. *Snow*, from 2000, shimmers like its namesake, with silvery tones smudged by gold and copper patches that suggest time-burnished vegetation peeping through the snow during a spring thaw.

Wabi, the most recent piece in the show, could be an aerial view of the Canadian shield, the 500-million-year-old rock plateau that covers much of Ontario, Beynon's home province. The asymmetrical geometry of the pin, which is set in a simple gold frame, provides a counterpoint to this little rockscape's mottled surface.

It is surprising, given the metals community's penchant for technique, that no one appears to have followed the trail Beynon has blazed. Perhaps the constant experimentation required to get worthwhile results makes the creation of powdered metal jewelry too daunting a prospect. Fortunately Beynon remains undeterred by the long road she has chosen.

Barbara Isherwood is a Toronto-based writer on visual arts and culture.

clockwise from top left

Wabi (pin), 2004
powdered metal (pure silver, copper, gold), 18k gold, silver, liver of sulphur patina
2 1/4 x 1 1/2 x 1/2"
Photo: Pirak Studio

Untitled (perfume bottle), 1982
copper, sterling silver and powdered metal (pure silver and pure copper), rokusho patina
4 1/4 x 6 x 1"
Photo: Pok Chi Lau

Fay's Pin, 2000
powdered metal (pure silver, copper, gold) with furnace patina, 18k gold, silver, topaz
2 1/4 x 1 1/2 x 1/2"
Photo: Doug Beynon

"BEYOND THE BODY: NORTHWEST JEWELERS AT PLAY"
TACOMA ART MUSEUM
MAY 14-SEPTEMBER 11, 2005

by REBECCA SCHEER

The labels warning visitors not to handle the jewelry in this exhibition read "Touching Harms the Art." Apparently, the curator finds this statement applied to jewelry ironic (albeit necessary) and included an interactive component welcoming visitors to "experience what it feels like to wear studio art jewelry." Four sculpture students from the Tacoma School of the Arts were invited by the museum to make jewelry for visitors to handle. These include a leather wristband with a twisted wire cage in which to insert the hand, and a muff-like neckpiece that positions a cylindrical wire cage lined with yellow feathers midway down the body. During the hours I observed, this jewelry petting zoo produced lively commentary among visitors, yet ostensibly was not the focus of the show.

What relegates work to protection behind glass is, in some cases, material value, often fragility, and occasionally, the collectible status of the artist. However, sensitivity to the resonance of materials and meticulous attention to form, surface, and detail is what distinguishes the work of the best professional Northwest studio jewelers.

Maria Phillips's *Necessary?* is a compelling case in point. Steel, paper, wasps nest, glass, pod, and string are made precious and thought provoking through exquisite construction. The nest structure both contains and warns of emerging anger/danger. Attachment to the body is deliberately uncertain, the hook suggesting pain and multiple points of connection, as well as possible liberation from this burden.

Marcia Macdonald's piece *If You Sit Still, You Can Take Off the Mask* deals with "the psychological chasm between one's true self and the personality we show the world." However, the doll-like and lavish working of the bound, seated figure distracts from empathy. Who is binding this character (besides the artist) and what is the role of the wearer in the personality charade?

Of the more traditional studio jewelry in the exhibit, Ron Ho's stunning neckpiece *Borobudur* joins his sinuous silver work with a wooden Indonesian sword hilt. Similarly, Ramona Solberg's *Untitled* (necklace with friendship card) delights the eye in antique colors of blues and brass.

In contrast to the group's affinity for large-scale work, Ken Cory's belt buckles deliver concise cultural criticism at the psychosexual locus of patriarchal power. *Autumn Sunset (Candy Corn)*, a buckle from the 1970s, appropriates Native American symbols and radiates resin candy corn, offering wry social commentary on the way cultures are consumed.

Like Cory, Jana Brevick employs humor in her most successful work. The minimal design of *Blat* evokes the nostalgic sound of a child's squeak toy. Her materials are neither precious nor overworked; she handles the form and sensuality of the materials with lighthearted finesse.

Countertop laminate is used to comment on the value of craft in Kate Wagle's *Material Conceits 1, 2, 3*. Applied to the wall in postmodern assemblages of multiple wood-grain Formica panels, each group of panels centers one silver ring in a velvet box on a small shelf. Skillfully constructed marquetry adorns the panels, transforming the common material into ironic works of art. Still, the perceived material value of Wagle's sterling rings tips the balance of value toward their favor, undercutting the commentary on the preciousness of craft versus material.

The only truly unwearable piece in the show is Heidi Schwegler's *Legacy*. She equates the idea of jewelry (rings) passed between generations with the genetic gifts of our ancestors, including abnormalities. Hundreds of rings set with what resemble medical tissue samples are sealed in a massive wall of candy-colored urethane blocks. Schwegler suggests we should value the imperfections our families bequeath.

Far from being playful, the exhibition implies Northwesterners make heavy jewelry and have heavy thoughts. Here's a heavy thought about the audience response to the touchable work: imagine if each of the studio jewelers created a non-precious piece for visitors to handle. Could we professionals even achieve such working freedom? Does it devalue what we do? Painstaking craft and hand-worked detail may be the forte of the craft artist. Nevertheless, these values generate preciousness, ultimately dividing the masses from experiencing the pleasures of "real" studio jewelry first-hand.

Rebecca Scheer is an actual and conceptual silversmith who lives, teaches, and works in Portland, Oregon.

clockwise from top left
Ron Ho
Borobudur, ca. 1986
fabricated and forged sterling silver with Indonesian sword hilt
Collection Tacoma Art Museum

Jana Brevick
Blat, 2001
found squeaker toy, steel, plastic, rubber

Maria Phillips
Necessary?, 1999
steel, handmade paper, wasps nest, glass lens, pod, string
approximately 28 x 3"

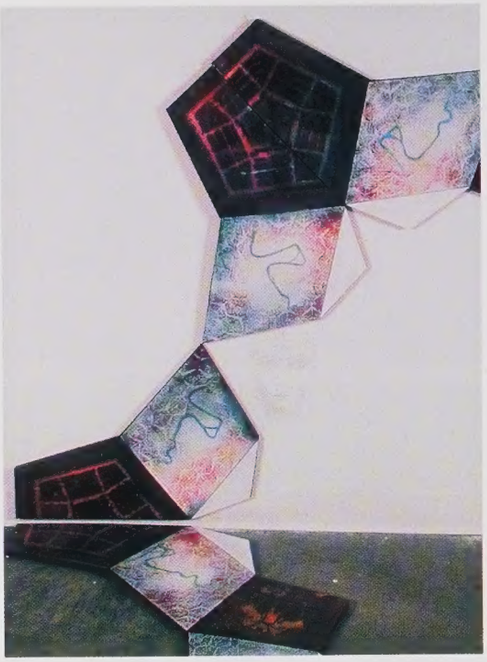
Marcia McDonald
If You Sit Still, You Can Take Off The Mask, 2000
wood, sterling silver, gold leaf, carved tagua nut
5 1/2 x 2 x 2 1/2"
Photo: Harry Taylor

REVIEWS

"EDUCATORS/EDUCATED: JEWELRY AND METALS IN OHIO"

THE REINBERGER GALLERIES, THE CLEVELAND INSTITUTE OF ART
JUNE 24-JULY 25, 2005

by SUSAN HOLT



It was BIG: 136 pieces by 71 artists from six Ohio degree-granting metals programs. It was comprehensive, spanning the period from 1955 to 2004. It was remarkably current. With the exception of artists long retired or deceased, most pieces were less than five years old. And, it was an encyclopedic display of metalsmithing craft from the historically traditional to the newest computer-aided processes.

Conceived by Kathleen Browne with the assistance of the Ohio Arts Council as a celebration of the work produced by Ohio-educated metalsmiths and the people who inspired them, the show was curated by independent curator Gail M. Brown. The current faculty of the University of Akron, Bowling Green University, Cleveland Institute of Art, Kent State University, Miami University of Ohio, and Ohio Wesleyan were asked to suggest past faculty and prominent alumni for inclusion. From this wish list Brown had the daunting task of assembling the exhibition in less than nine months before it went to the first of three venues.

Large traveling shows, especially those without thematic cohesion, can all too easily devolve into a stew of dubious merit and mixed talent containing, perhaps, a few bright spots while the rest is mercifully ignored. The question that always arises is, it's big, but is it good? Does it deserve our attention beyond sheer quantity? The answer in this case is definitely yes. This makes the viewer's experience wonderfully rewarding but the reviewer's job more difficult.

The consistent excellence of the work and the workmanship is the first feature to stand out. No one institution outshines the others. No star educator eclipses his or her students, many of whom have become prominent educators in their own right. The strength of the work here makes it impossible to single out individuals without doing genuine disservice to equally deserving others. Moreover, all but the youngest artists have rightly received considerable attention over the years.

The range of both form and format in this show is a metals education in itself. The teapot, classic holloware, abstract sculptural pieces, installation, precious jewelry, art jewelry, and conceptual vessels, all make credible appearances here. Further, most artists are represented by more than a single piece so that some insight into their larger thinking may be gained. In classic North American tradition much of the work is explicitly narrative in nature, either telling a story or detailing cultural commentary. The didactic, the deconstructive, and the discursive are rendered with equal skill and sensitivity to materials. Indeed, even those expressly wearable objects stretch the formal and physical possibilities. Additionally, the work is highly individual. The educators have succeeded in inspiring the educated to find and fulfill their own voices.

If there emerges an overarching theme to this expansive exhibition it is that of thoughtful engagement with both the medium and the world at large without losing sight of its historical context within metalsmithing. What unites the artists is not simply geography but an approach to their craft that begins to move it beyond artisanry and into the arena of broader discourse, and, hopefully, to the attention of a broader audience.

The next 50 years of the Ohio metals community seem less assured. More than half the artists shown here are, or have been, educators, many as department heads or full-time faculty. This has permitted them to make work most fully appreciated within their own community. It would be wonderful to imagine that the creativity and fecundity evidenced within the microcosm of Ohio represents the future of metalsmithing. Attracting the appreciation of an expanded audience may require metalsmithing to widen its own discourse and to connect both its history and its practice to ideas that fuel the interest of that audience. In the meantime, "Educators/Educated" stands as a testimony to intelligence, commitment, and excellence.

Susan Holt is a metalsmith teacher at The College For Creative Studies in Detroit, Michigan.

clockwise from top
Katy Bergman Cassel
Lost in Iraq, 2004
enamel on steel, copper, drawings on wall and floor
120 x 96 x 1/2"

Felicia Szorad
Celestial, 2000
cap with removable brooches
sterling silver, copper, bronze, vitreous enamel
2 1/2 x 6 x 6 1/2"

Danielle Crissman
Spirit Within, 2002
copper
9 3/4 x 14 x 13"

Sophia Calderwood
Contact, 2001
sterling silver, dyed ear plugs
2 x 2 x 1 1/2"

"WILLIAM CLARK: JEWELRY AND SCULPTURE 1960-2005"

VELVET DA VINCI, SAN FRANCISCO
JULY 27-AUGUST 21, 2005

by JENNIFER CROSS GANS

There is hardly a single metal artist who hasn't tried his or her hand at a spiculum. However, it's rare to achieve the technical mastery and theatrical imagination of William Clark, whose retrospective exhibition was on display at Velvet da Vinci.

His flawless brass spicula were shown to towering effect in several brass body sculptures made for a Berkeley dance company in the early 1970s. There were antlers, spirals, even an imaginary addition to the symphony brass section. (A reviewer at the time said, "any lady who wore one would look as if she hadn't been able to get out of her French horn.") No problem, though, for a dancer; though heavy, the pieces were perfectly balanced. Unrolled, they would have been several feet long, tapering to fine points, with no visible solder seams. On a smaller scale, Clark used the same technique to make bold but elegant pendants, neckpieces, and pins.

Clark first became interested in metalsmithing as a restless teenager in Saudi Arabia. After working as a sailor, fisherman, mechanic, and laborer, he established himself on the Berkeley art scene in the early 1960s. His work rapidly won prizes at local and national shows, and was eagerly collected by individuals and museums, particularly in the San Francisco Bay Area.

A small amount of his early pieces have the 1960s art show look of extravagant lost wax carving reminiscent of early Bob Winston. But Clark quickly developed his own unique and enduring style and a strong design sense, combining boldness, humor, and an active social conscience. He wanted people to think, and smile, while their mental wheels were turning.

The anti-war theme showed up at the time of the Vietnam conflict, for example in a 1971 pendant of a gold-plated copper bomb called *Necklace for the American Taxpayer*, a *Survival Necklace*, ringed by vials of freeze-dried foods, and a working nightstick with microphone attachment called *The Little Confessor*, commemorating the Berkeley street demonstrations of the period. He has continued to produce a popular *Police State* badge, and added a new anti-war medal which was snapped up by the Victoria and Albert Museum during the recent traveling show "Anti War Medals: Artists Respond to the War."

Sexuality was another motif, showing in elegant *Sperm Pins* (spicula again!), a pair of outside leg calipers, and a breastplate of carved Lucite, lexan, and powdered gold, echoing in miniature the statue of many-breasted Diana of the Ephesians. Technology also took a quiet hit, with a table sculpture of a wrench curved round on itself like a snake and biting its own tail.

Architectural metal and woodwork is hard to display in a gallery. However, the show did include recent examples of elaborately cut black steel screens, reminiscent of Haitian or Cambodian folk art, called *Mother* and *Primavera*.

Clark's love for tools was evident in many pieces. He created a wonderful pin series of wood and silver hammers, axes, and saws, and an outsized wrench shoulder-piece in aluminum and magnesium. The show also included two unique and touching crucifixes, one for mechanics and another for carpenters—a reminder that Christ was a woodworker and St. Eligius, patron saint of metalworkers, was a jeweler.

The versatile Clark is equally comfortable working in wood, plastics, and a variety of precious and non-precious metals. As accents (or fillers) he's used gemstones, Sassanian seals, even wheat, popcorn, dried fish, and seahorses. He is currently turning a hand to glass, cooperating with Alan Rhodes to make a serious but smiling point with a *Feminist Feeder*, a plump, woman-shaped baby bottle, perhaps designed to give dad a chuckle as he takes over the night feeding. It's clear that Clark will never run out of materials, appropriate subjects, or targets. Let's hope he can also keep his sense of humor.

Jennifer Cross Gans is a writer and studio jeweler in San Francisco.

clockwise from top left
Anti-War Medal, 2002
bronze, brass, sterling silver, 14k gold, grosgrain ribbon
7 x 1 3/4 x 3/8"

The Lupine Necklace (body sculpture), 1973
brass
48 x 36 x 27"

Tool Pins
sterling silver, ebony
various sizes

REVIEWS

"MICHAEL ZOBEL"

PATINA GALLERY, SANTA FE
JUNE 10-13, 2005

by ELLEN BERKOVITCH

That to wear jewelry corresponds to an assumption of physical mastery expresses itself at a glance in the dazzling, talismanic objects from Michael Zobel's Constance, Germany, atelier. The exhibit showed 224 objects and required putting the rest of the gallery inventory into the vault for five days. About three-quarters of the work dated 2005; a fourth was from 2004. It represents the production of about five bench jewelers at Zobel Atelier, where Zobel remains creative director and vision-heir, as he now passes the business reins to protégé Peter Schmid.

A student in the early 1960s of the late German master, Klaus Ullrich, at Pforzheim's Fachhochschule, Zobel has for more than 35 years been operating at a border that marries jewelrymaking to technical marvels, and jewelry-wearing to a fundamental, pre-linguistic urge. Earthbound minerals and gemstones express color, texture, and form kinesthetically. Take, for example, a conch shell ring whose shank is pierced, as if by the plunging action of a pear corer, with a perfectly smooth hole. Are you meant to turn your finger and hold the ring's flare to your ear? The brown-and-white shell shank announces, as forms do in nature, unimaginable complexity. Pink as a baby's tongue, the ring's flower is glass-smooth. It nests an exquisite conch pearl, which was found in the shell. Wrapped where the cup is deepest is a spray of platinum sheet. Three pinprick diamonds glister in it. The object, like a bracelet that sets a 37-carat fire opal with its jagged edge breaking the edge of the cuff, is a landscape in which jewels function as relief objects in metallurgic textiles lacquered and patterned as landforms.

The message is that artifice can improve on nature—mine, yours and its—if, by improvement, bold conjecture is implied. Picture, now, Zobel, who designs the layout of his own shows and, this year, used eight-foot-high panels of fashion photographs to drape jewelry like bored models. His daughter, Yolanda, posed for the red catalog that reminds all viewers how brut the German aesthetic can (still) be. Zobel's clearly is an art brut that knows the alchemical properties, even divinatory ones, assigned to gems and metals. And then pushes all that slightly to one side in favor of a polish that is graphic, commercial art.

The jewelry can be quite large: how does it pinion or free bodily motions? Perhaps Zobel zooms a loupe for a better look at the mineral content of a gem, or refines a telescope at the surface curtain that expresses the sky's dot matrices. He must study myth. His material choices hybridize geology, astronomy, fashion, graphics, and carnival. Zobel exaggerates the implication that material unfolds from sources bitterly cold, brutally rough, extracted by surface rent.

The exhibition featured luminous, cragged pendants, in shapes suggestive of Maltese crosses (Zobel, born in Morocco, grew up in Barcelona), hung on the wall. A large heart, sprayed with champagne diamonds on platinum and overlaid by an echoing shape in rubelite, could be worn at ear or throat. The street-facing display window used its span to reveal to passers-by the epic smallnesses of jewelry: the way, for instance, that surface metals alloyed separately and applied in lacquers can be tablets for calligraphy that is as individualist as a finger's whorls. Jungendstil exploded by Aztec sun. Soft amber trapping diamonds.

The Zobel mark vocabulary is distinctive: nesting spirals, patterned animal stripes, blisters from the smelting, and, often, tracks of constellations zipping across fused planes.

Ullrich is often cited as the force that influenced the move from soldering to fusing, and encouraged artists coming of age in the era of painterly abstraction to exalt the mark that located their body in the gesture. For jewelry, this was shape-shifting stuff. Befittingly, Zobel's stones, so essential to what he does, often communicate in their placement a sense of group dynamics, as if to say they are alone here by the merest chance. Released into chaos, they could be re-ordering a landslide.

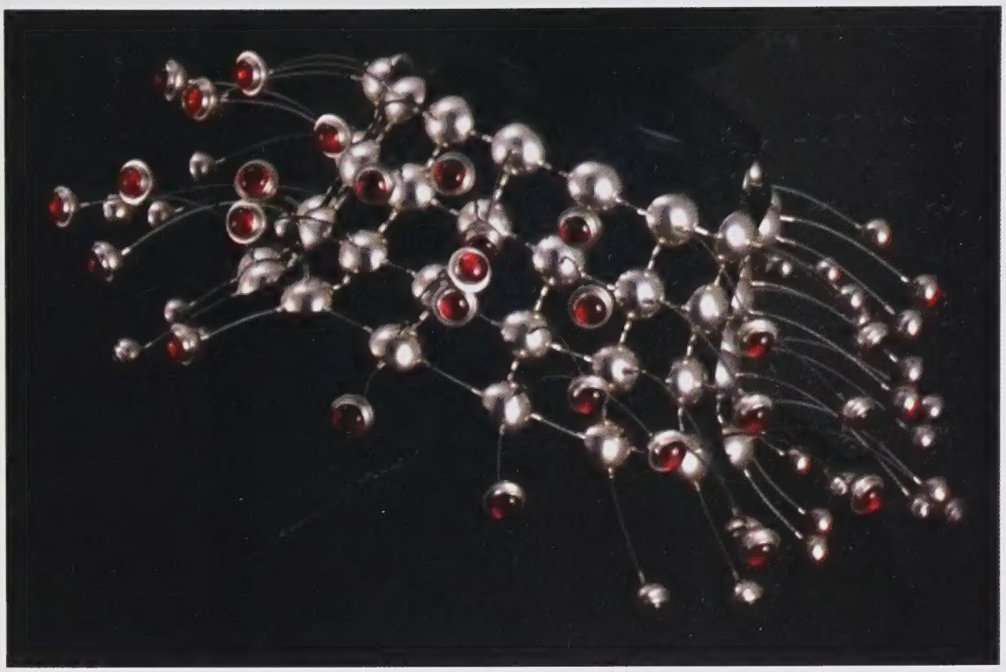
Overall, this exhibit conveyed mobility and the trajectories of creativity, emboldened by the money to buy and use glorious stones. Zobel helps to remind us that the jeweler's golden rule must be animation. These objects effect a surface jolt, creating a disturbance in the mind.

Ellen Berkovitch is a writer based in Santa Fe.

clockwise from top
Earrings, 2004
18k and 24k gold, yellow diamonds, champagne diamond
diameter 1 1/2"

Brooch, 2004
sterling silver
22k and 24k gold, platinum, amethyst quartz, champagne diamond
height 3"

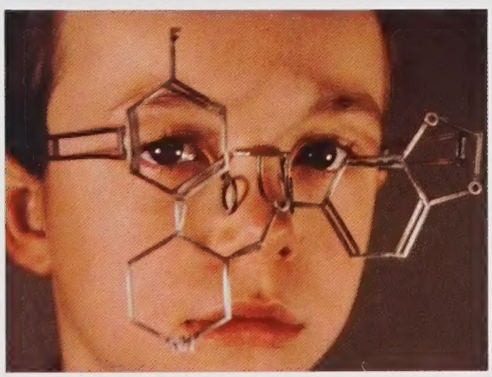
Cuff, 2005
sterling silver, 22k and 24k gold, coral
heigth 2 1/2"



"CALIFORNIA METALS NOW"

THE BLUE ROOM GALLERY, SAN FRANCISCO
JUNE 30–AUGUST 28, 2005

by JENNIFER CROSS GANS



Paul Mahder, director of the Blue Room Gallery in San Francisco's Mission District, recently teamed up with the local Metal Arts Guild to offer an ambitious show of California metals. To ensure cutting-edge quality, he added three more curators: Shana Astrachan (Guild) and the nationally known Susan Cummins and Suzanne Baizerman (Oakland Museum).

A substantial body of work came from San Diego State University graduate students, alumni, or faculty, headed by Helen Shirk, who contributed an elegant commemorative cup *Clarice's Fancy*. There were several other well-known exhibitors, and it is to their credit that much of their work was new and different.

David La Plantz, best known for his cold connected anodyzed aluminum, offered a whimsical table sculpture in mixed media, *Tribute to Wolfman Jack Microphone*. Carol Webb had two elegant pins in etched copper-clad fine silver. Jack da Silva showed a madcap teapot combining sterling silver, pencils, ruler, stainless steel, nylon, and rubber.

Several of the most exciting pieces were made by emerging artists, including near-beginners. Eivind Sarto, with a mere one year's experience in metals, created an elegant *Sea Vessel* in steel, copper, enamel, and patina. Ron Elson, a practicing psychiatrist, produced an intriguing urethane lock with a dimly seen key embedded inside called *Embryonic Solution*.

Several artists experimented with size and space. Adam Clark showed two goliath-sized, wall mounted, steel and wood necklaces. Large but wearable necklaces were offered by Gabriela Gutierrez and Christine McGrath.

Susie Ganch chose to explore more subtle issues of personal space. In the past, this artist produced intricately joined caps and neckpieces that were designed both to protect the wearer and to keep viewers at a distance. She is now working more freely, creating an exuberant neckpiece and bracelet in silver, cable, and lab-grown rubies popping and waving like jeweled sea anemonies.

Naturally it wouldn't be California without an underlay (or overlay) of social and political concerns. One of the loudest voices in the room came from Gale Hart, who used recycled metals in a depressing series of sculptures called *Only Dominated Animals with Broken Spirits Will Perform.*

Love, sex, and marriage were seen with a humorous or jaundiced eye by several artists. Emiko Oye and Patty Nelson both showed wedding crowns and veils calculated to send mothers-in-law into hysterics. Nelson's *Sit, Stay, Love and Obey* had a crown of silver dog biscuits topped by half a tennis ball, and a veil decorated with photos of the artist and her pooch. Vernon Theiss created a bud vase emerging from a sad little enclosed garden titled *Illusion of Romance*. David Clemons went directly to the sexual point with a male garment in silver, steel, and leather coyly called *Protecting the Piece*.

Prescription drugs took a hit from a Berkeley artist, Linda Michel-Cassidy, who showed a silver and wood knuckle-duster ring called *Bovine Growth Hormone Personal Branding Iron*. She also created silver *Paxil Glasses*, shaped like a benzine ring, ideal for anyone in a "blue state" funk or panic.

Several artists explored war, violence, and injustice. Emiko Oye created a sculptural headpiece called *The Past is Present – Violations of the IV* from her "State of Liberty" crown series, using recycled plastics, wood, steel, fine and sterling silver with soil from Manzanar Camp to remind us of the Japanese internment during World War II. Jeffrey Clancy showed *Tea for One*, a demurely patterned teapot transfixed with a gun acting as spout and handle.

Linking all the exhibits was the impressive skill in using a wide variety of metals. There were master craftsmen in wire, such as Thomas Hill, noted for his delightfully modeled animals and birds, and Mark Norstad, who showed a couch of titanium tubes, aluminum frames, and stainless steel fasteners. Last but not least, there were two pieces that any museum might scramble to own. One was Kent Raible's sumptuous *Aqua Temple Ring* in gold, with gold granulation, and unusually cut blue sapphires and aquamarines. The other was a wickedly beautiful knife by John Jensen, titled *Icarus*, and fabricated in San Mai steel, anodized titanium, 18k gold, wood, and gemstones.

Jennifer Cross Gans is a writer and studio jeweler in San Francisco.

clockwise from top left
Adam Clark
Untitled, 2003
steel, stainless steel, aluminum, wood, stone
19 x 11 x 6"

Susie Ganch
Untitled (necklace), 2004
sterling silver, stainless steel, lab grown rubies, magnets
11 x 11 x 4"

Linda Michel-Cassidy
Paxil Glasses, 2004
sterling silver
8 x 4 x 8"

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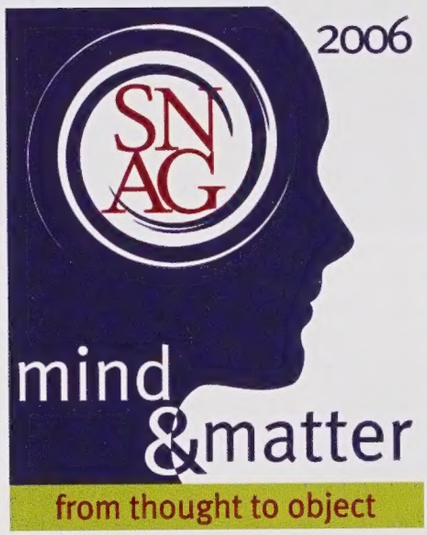
by Dana Singer



SNAG 2006 Conference in Chicago

The SNAG 2006 conference, "Mind & Matter: From Thought to Object," takes place May 24-27, hosted by the Chicago Metals Guild and chaired by Alix Mikesell and Pam Robinson. Keynote Speaker Tom Friedman, internationally renowned sculptor, will be joined by eleven other exciting presenters, ranging from jewelers Karl Fritsch and Ramon Puig Cuyas, to neurologist Frank Wilson, author of *The Hand*, and Terry Sisco, fine jewelry retail store consultant. Attendees will also be treated to eleven concurrent exhibitions, a host of special events, and a final night Speakeasy Party. 3M, Inc. and Rio Grande again provide significant financial support to the conference, in addition to a grant received from an anonymous foundation.

SNAG Moves to Eugene, Oregon

SNAG has relocated its business office to Eugene, Oregon, closing its office in Naperville, IL. On January 1, the SNAG office formally opened its doors at 540 Oak Street, Suite A, Eugene, OR 97401. Longtime Executive Director Dana Singer hired two staff people: Associate Director Tina Rinaldi, former Director of the Jacobs Arts Gallery in Eugene, and Operations Manager Tara Jecklin, most recently a manager at the Lane County Arts Council, also in Eugene. SNAG's web address remains the same: www.snagmetalsmith.org.

SNAG Welcomes New Editorial Advisory Committee Members

The Editorial Advisory Committee of *Metalsmith* welcomes two new members: Kenneth Trapp, consultant/curator and former Chief Curator, Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, and Mija Riedel, a writer who most recently served as West Coast field researcher of the Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project, Archives of American Art. Trapp and Riedel will each serve three-year terms. SNAG profusely thanks outgoing EAC members Marjorie Simon, who also served as Chair of the committee, and Mary Douglas, for their years of dedicated service and wise counsel to the editor, Suzanne Ramljak.

SNAG-Sponsored Workshops

With funding from SNAG's Workshop Grants Program, Lisa Gralnick was hosted by Boise State University and in April taught a workshop on Hollow Construction and Mechanisms, and gave a public lecture. Boris Bally traveled to Ball State University in March to teach "Design and Build with Found Objects," accompanied by two public lectures, one on his "Gun Totem Public Art Proposal" and a second one on his work and career.

Dana Singer is executive director of SNAG.

top to bottom
Conference logo for the 2006 SNAG Conference in Chicago

Newly appointed members of *Metalsmith*'s Editorial Advisory Committee, Kenneth Trapp and Mija Riedel

Boris Bally leading a SNAG-sponsored workshop at Ball State University

Lisa Gralnick (standing in black) with students in a workshop sponsored by SNAG at Boise State University

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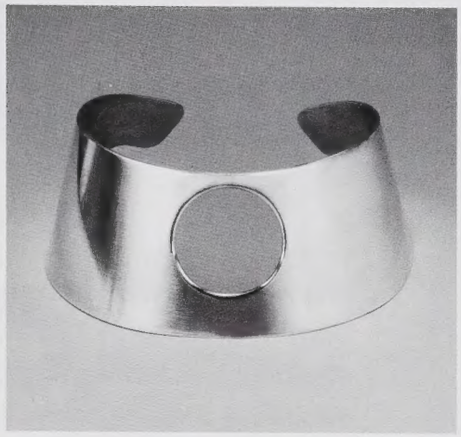

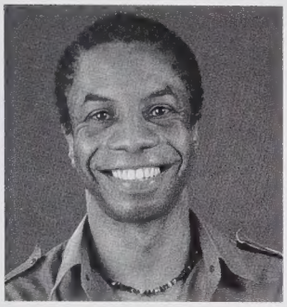

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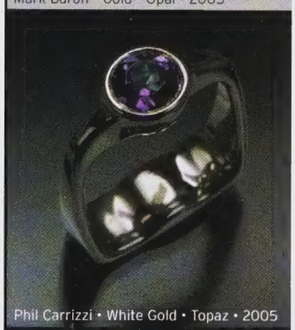
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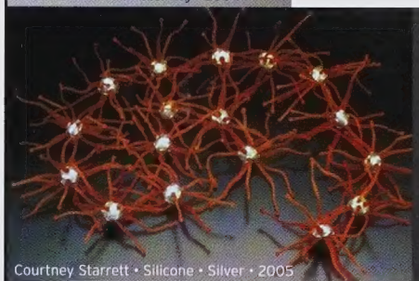
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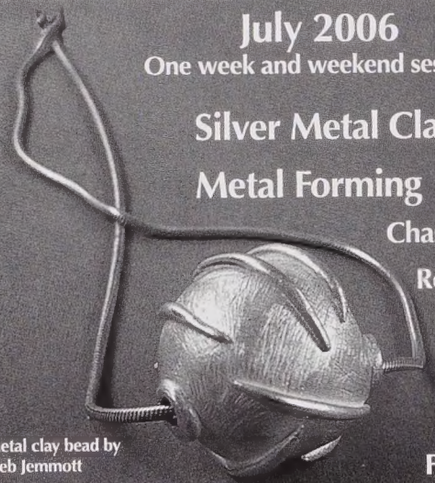

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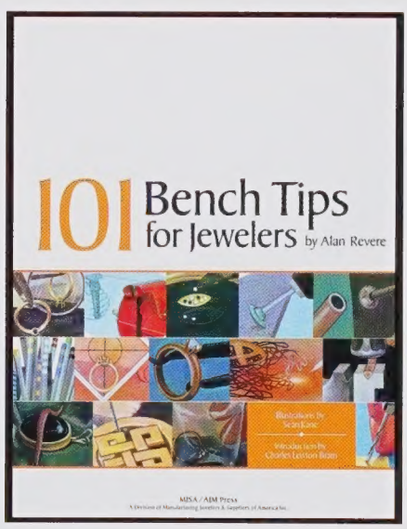

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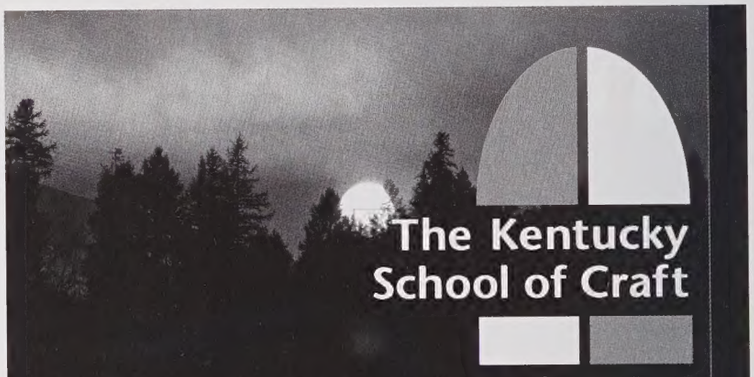

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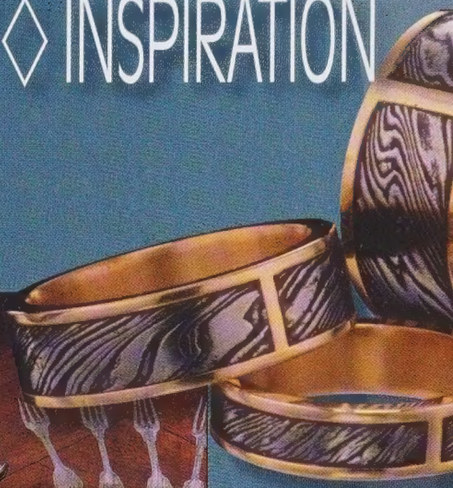

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Douglas Harling
Title: Sea Saw
Description: 1-3/8"x2-1/4"x1/2", 22k gold, 14k gold pin mechanism, and freshwater pearls
Photo: Douglas Harling

Namu Cho
Title: Rings
Description: Damascus steel with 22k gold 18k gold
Photo: Hap Sakwa Photography

(Winter 2005 Metalsmith)
cover: Cornelia Parker
Title: Thirty Pieces of Silver (exhaled)-Cake Stand
Description: Dimensions variable (43" diameter), 30 silver plated items crushed b 250-ton industrial press, metal wire
Courtesy Frith Street Gallery, London

Sarah Perkins
Title: Stubble Beggar's Bowl
Description: 3"x4"x4", copper, enamel
Photo: Sarah Perkins

Kiwon Wang
Title: Water Drop Series
Description: 2-1/2"x2-1/2"x3/8, 14k gold pearl, sterling silver
Photo: Kiwon Wang

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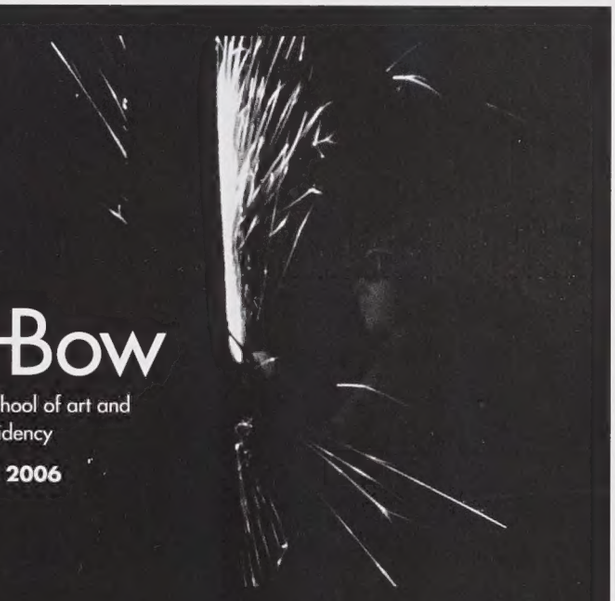

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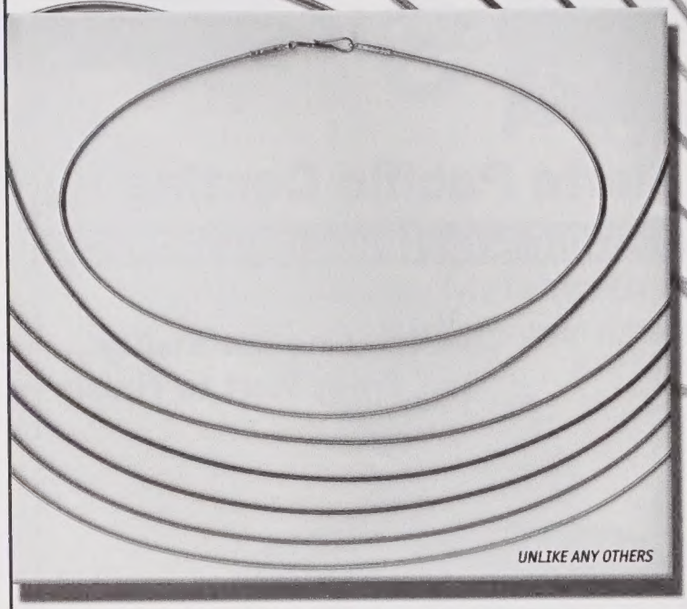

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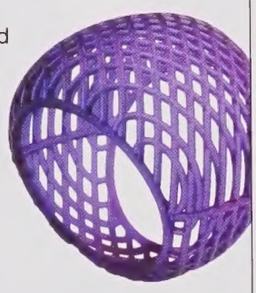

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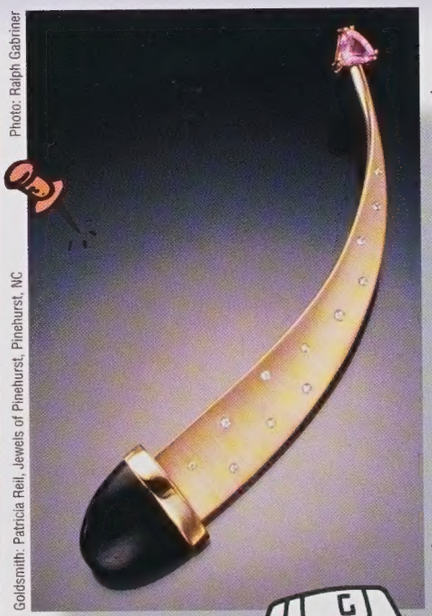
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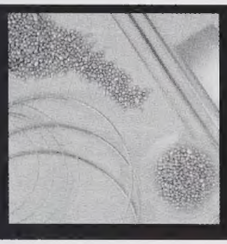

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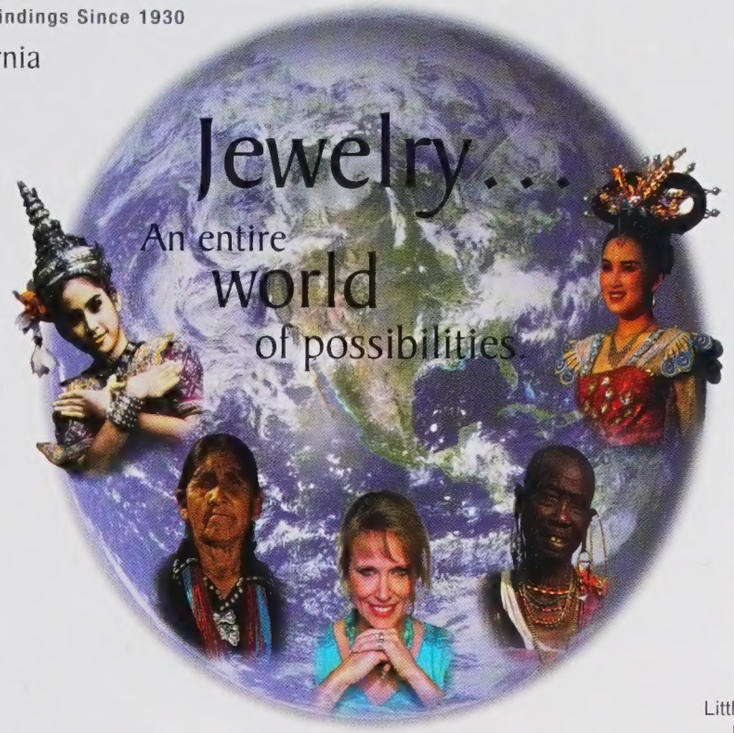

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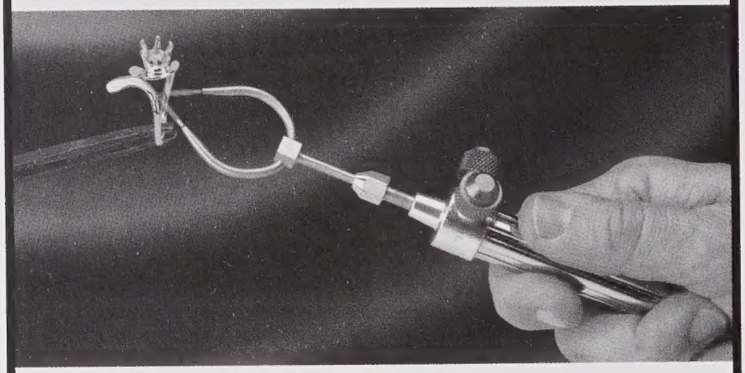

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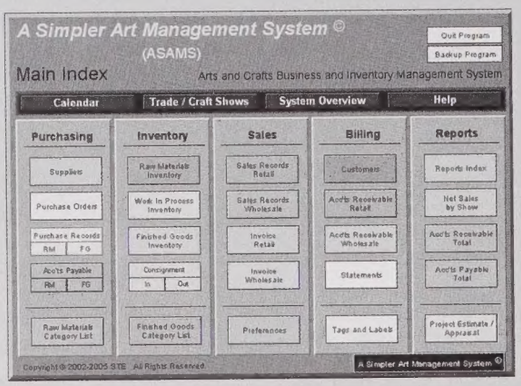

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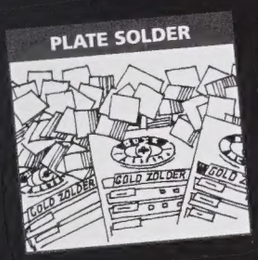

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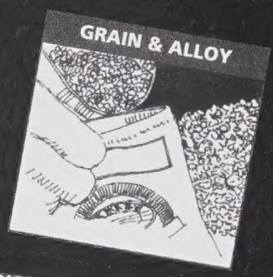

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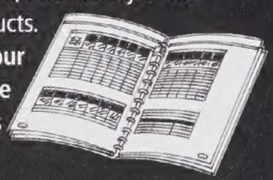

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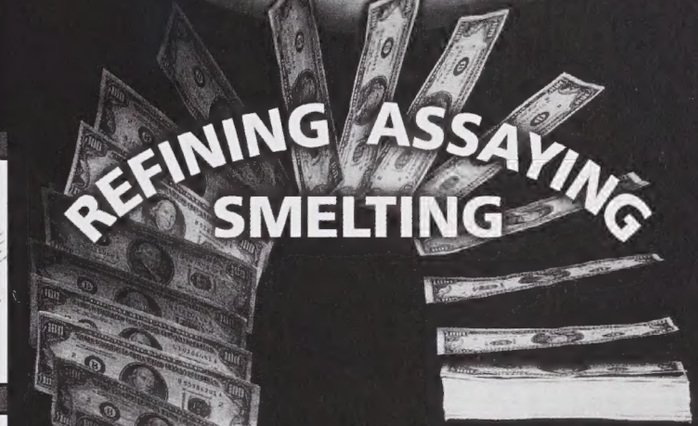

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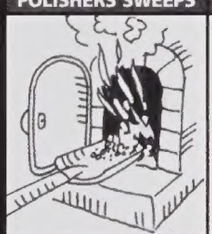

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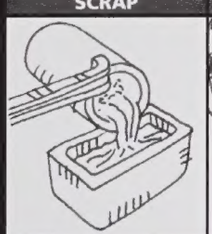

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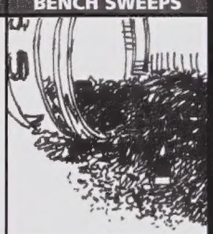

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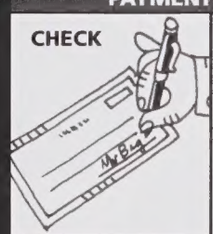

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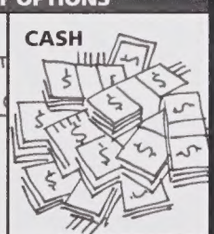

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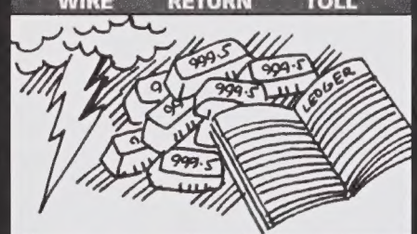

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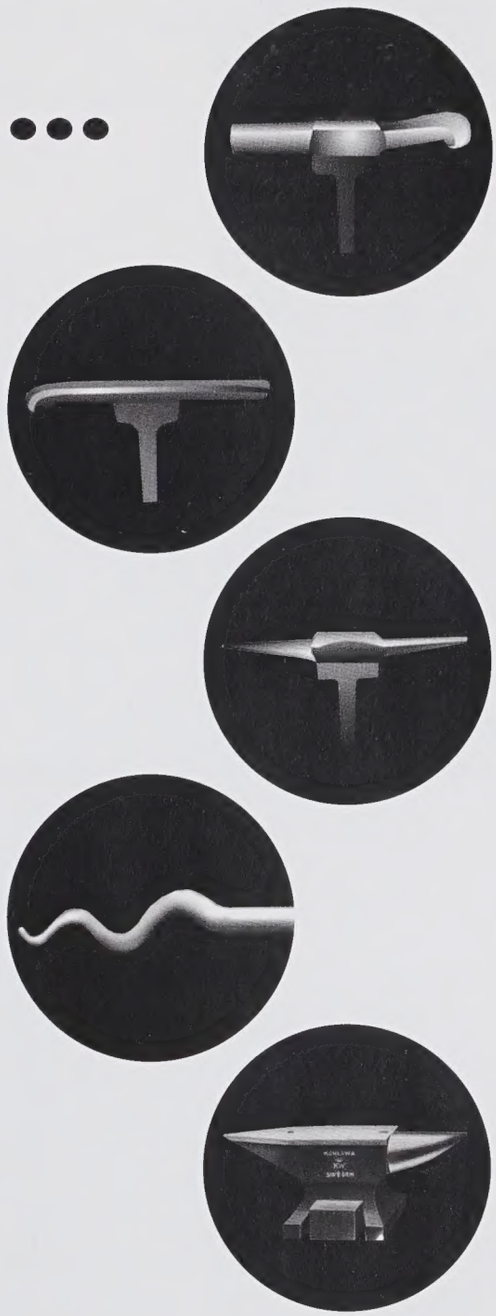

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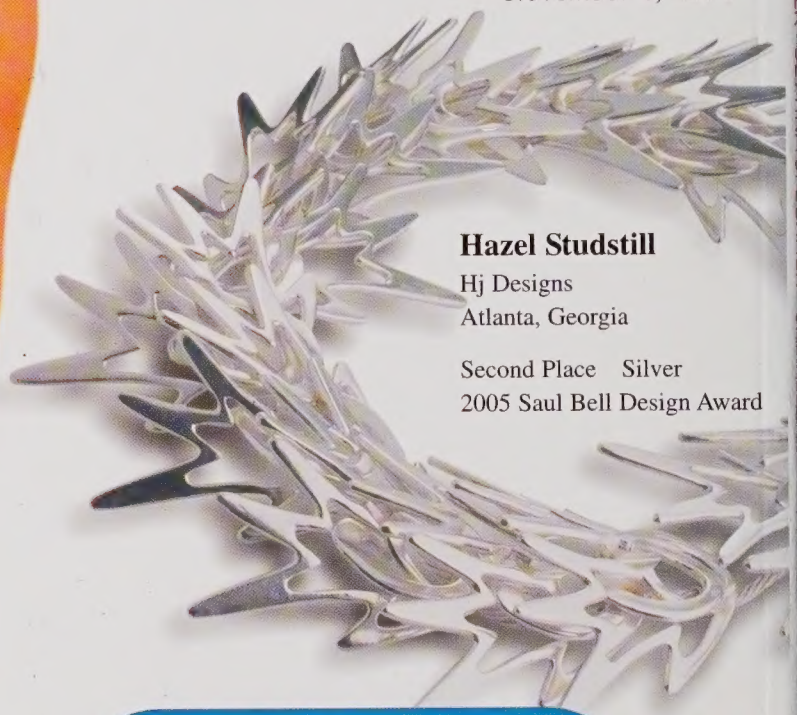
"That's just life,

so darlin', don't cry." Josh Rouse crooned through the speaker of a stereo that sat atop the seat of a recumbent bike resting against the wall. Hazel sat at her bench, surrounded by scraps of metal and hanging tools. Leaning forward, she reached for pliers that lay just beyond her arm's length. No pain. Not even the tiniest bit. For months, her smallest movements had been restricted by a back injury, one that had plagued her creativity. But she had been determined.

She strung the last cast component onto the cable and held the necklace up to inspect it. Hands holding hands? No. She held the ends in her fingertips and, twisting one, noticed how the piece articulated each rough, spiny piece flowed sinuously to the next… just like the vertebrae in her spine.

While there may be scars, beauty comes from healing. Creating is healing.

—November 8, 2004



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